■ WORLD / A8

UN chief seeks talks as cartoon protests escalate

■ ACROSS / A15

175,000 cubic meters of spilled oil in Semirara now under water

■ NEWS / A2

Coup rumors spur Valentine's Day alert in Metro

■ METRO / A17

10 teenagers bolt jail in Pasig City

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PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

Tuesday, February 14, 2006 ★★★ 6 sections / Vol. 21 / No. 68 P18 website: www.inq7.net

Pasig cop chief, 6 PDEA men axed over shabu bust

By Luige A. del Puerto

THE PASIG CITY POLICE CHIEF AND SIX MEMbers of the Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency in charge of eastern Metro Manila were sacked in the widening fallout from last week's police raid on a colony of shabu dens in Pasig City.

Metro Manila police chief Director Vidal Querol said last night he had ordered the relief of Senior

PASIG/ A7

Cheney accidentally shoots fellow hunter in Texas

CORPUS CHRISTI, TEXAS—VICE PRESIDENT Dick Cheney accidentally shot and wounded a companion during a weekend quail hunting trip in Texas, spraying the fellow hunter in the face and chest with shotgun pellets.

Harry Whittington, a millionaire attorney from Austin, was in stable condition in the intensive care unit of a Corpus Christi hospital on Sunday.

"He is stable and doing well. It was almost like

CHENEY/ A6

RP credit image boosted

Another int'l ratings agency revises outlook on RP debt to 'stable'

By Michelle V. Remo and Doris C. Dumlao
Business

THE COUNTRY'S CREDIT IMage got another boost after Fitch Ratings yesterday revised its outlook on the Philippines from "negative" to "stable," citing an improving fiscal climate and easing political tension.

Reacting to Fitch's assessment, the peso climbed to a new three-and-a-half-year high to 51.42 to the dollar in early trading but later succumbed to profit-taking and closed at P51.585.

A "stable" outlook removes the threat of a credit-rating downgrade in the near term, and even makes possible an upgrade in the ratings.

An increase in the ratings, which means an improvement in a government's credit worthiness, results in lower interest rates imposed on its borrowings.

"The good 2005 fiscal performance and 2006 fiscal outlook, together with a more settled political environment, warrant the change in outlook," James McCormack, head of Asia Sovereigns at Fitch, said in a statement.

Fitch joined Standard & Poor's, which upgraded the Philippines last week, although another agency, Moody's Investors Service, said it was maintaining its "negative" outlook on the Philippines despite recent economic reforms.

Of the three rating agencies, Fitch had the most optimistic rating on Philippine risk at two notches below investment grade (BB on foreign currency debt) compared to Standard & Poor's three notches below and Moody's four notches below investment grade.

The three credit rating agencies slapped the country with a "negative" outlook—a precursor of a possible ratings downgrade—in July last year after the Supreme Court suspended the implementation of the expanded valued-added tax and key economic man-

RP CREDIT/ A9

COUPLES deep in love find their enchanted evening with Manila Bay's world-famous sunset in the background at the Baywalk on Roxas Boulevard on the eve of Valentine's Day.

REM ZAMORA

Cupid works overtime in RP call centers

By Volt Contreras

WHAT IS LOVE LIKE IN THE time of call centers?

It's about going on dates in the morning, obviously the only time available for couples or spouses who work in these high-tech firms while the rest of the city sleeps.

It's also about seduction, infidelity and other dangerous games of the heart that thrive in the isolation of workstation cubicles.

Call centers are said to be one of today's brightest spots in the economy, but they have their own share of dark secrets when it comes to office intimacy, according to insiders.

There have been so many extramarital affairs at one call center, for example, that its management finally cautioned its employees in a general assembly recently. According to one of the workers, the company owner himself gave "tips on how to make relationships last"—with legitimate partners, that is.

For the hundreds of thousands of Filipinos who work in such companies, the romance—illicit or not—must conform to their nocturnal schedules and altered body clocks.

Instead of moonlit walks or leisurely dinners, a quick morning bite at any 24-hour store or café would often do for the likes of Joyce and Paul Tabake, a young married couple who work in different call centers at about the same night-till-dawn slot.

She reports to Ambergris Solutions in Ortigas while he to People Support in Makati City. Whenever she and her hubby go out on dates before coming home together from work, the metropolis is just starting its day and Cupid must still be curled up in his diapers.

In those hours, what spice and variety could the city possibly offer to such a bonding pair?

"It could be Starbucks, 7-11, Min-

CUPID/ A6

Comelec deal 'overpriced' by ₱500M

By Philip C. Tubeza

THE VOIDED AUTOMATED COUNTING MAchines deal that the Commission on Elections entered into with MegaPacific Corp. was overpriced by as much as P500 million, Solicitor General Alfredo Benipayo told the Senate yesterday.

Benipayo said he received bank documents showing that while the Comelec paid MegaPacific P1.3 billion, the corporation gave the South Korean firm that manufactured the counting machines only "a little over half a billion pesos."

"The documents will show that after MegaPacific had been awarded a bid, it entered into a contract with a certain Korean firm for the manufacture of the counting machines, and Comelec provided the funds for the purchase … a little over P1 billion," Benipayo said during the Department of Justice budget hearing at the Senate.

"(But) the documents would tend to show (that) what was paid by MegaPacific to the Korean firm was only about a little over half a billion pesos," he said. "There was a big overprice."

Senate President Franklin Drilon and Sen. Edgardo Angara urged Benipayo to provide the Senate with copies of the documents, which Drilon described as the "paper trail on the overpricing" of the MegaPacific deal.

The two senators noted that the Comelec was again asking for P1 billion in the 2006 national budget for its modernization program.

The Supreme Court in January 2004 void-

COMELEC / A9

Briton teaches how to make love potions

By Lynett A. Villariba

HISTORY, ACCORDING TO HOLLYwood, says Cleopatra seduced Mark Antony by wearing a love potion and little else.

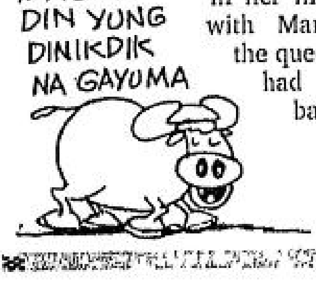
If you can't afford to wear little else, you can always concoct a love potion or *gayuma* to ensnare the man or woman of your dreams.

Dr. Mike Turvill, a British expatriate with a doctorate in chemistry, teaches the science of mixing love potions in a spa school in Parañaque City.

In one lecture, Turvill drew a parallel with the story of Cleopatra and her vast arsenal of scents.

In her first meeting with Mark Antony, the queen of Egypt had her royal barge washed in rose water and

BRITON/ A6



ROGER MARGALLO

VALENTINE CONCERT
Ageless American singer Andy Williams waves to his Filipino fans upon arriving at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport. He will perform in a Valentine's Day concert tonight at the Araneta Coliseum.

Fancy meals, chocolates for lovers all over Asia

LOVERS ACROSS ASIA WILL BE celebrating Valentine's Day today with fancy meals, sumptuous chocolates, ritzy hotel suites—and, above all, plenty of cash.

Money may not buy you love but it sure helps, if the prices of some of this year's Valentine specials are any indication.

Beijing's Shangri-La Hotel is offering a 99,999-yuan ($12,425) package that includes 99 red roses, limousine pick-up, a presidential suite with spa facilities, French cuisine and a one-carat diamond ring.

As the Beijing Evening News put it: "The target customers are those young millionaires."

China's obsession with plastic surgery is also finding fresh demand from couples who are going under the knife to get their noses and even their eyes done as a sign of their love for one another, the official newspaper China Daily reported.

"I suggested it as a way of celebrating our relationship and bringing us closer together with a special kind of bond," Liu Yan, 24, was quoted as saying of the matching nose jobs for her and her 28-year-old boyfriend.

Liu said her boyfriend "loved the idea" and readily paid 10,000 yuan ($1,200) for the surgery.

"We're very happy with the results," Liu added.

Business at Shanghai's plastic surgery clinics has risen by up to 30 percent since the beginning of the month, fueled by Valentine's Day and the recent lunar New Year, when young people typically receive job bonuses and

FANCY/ A6

WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Northern Luzon will have cloudy skies with rainshowers while the eastern sections of the country will experience cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers and isolated thunderstorms, becoming frequent rains over the Bicol region and eastern sections of Visayas and Mindanao.

COMPILED BY JAMIE ALARCON, PDI RESEARCH/02/14/06 SOURCE PAGASA

Metro Manila	Partly Cloudy	Iloilo/Bacolod	Cloudy with Rains
Baguio	Partly Cloudy	Roxas	Cloudy with Rains
Tuguegarao	Cloudy with Rains	Cebu	Cloudy with Rains
Laoag	Cloudy with Rains	Tacloban	Cloudy with Rains
Clark Zone	Partly Cloudy	Gen. Santos	Cloudy with Rains
Tagaytay	Partly Cloudy	Zamboanga	Cloudy with Rains
Legazpi	Cloudy with Rains	Cagayan de Oro	Cloudy with Rains
Calapan	Partly Cloudy	Davao	Cloudy with Rains

Second FRONT PAGE

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Coup talk spurs tighter security

SECURITY IN METRO MANILA WAS TIGHTened yesterday, the eve of last year's deadly Valentine's Day bombings by Moro rebels, as fresh rumors swirled of a coup plot against President Macapagal-Arroyo.

Under "Task Force Valentine," extra police patrolled the streets and 10 mobile checkpoints were set up after dark. The Coast Guard was also placed on high alert.

The security fears were heightened by rumors of a "typhoon coup" against Ms Arroyo, whose legitimacy continues to be questioned following allegations of vote-rigging and graft.

Word spread through text messages on Sunday that a coup would break out "within the next 24 to 48 hours," the second time in two months that coup rumors circulated.

The first time occurred when President Arroyo went overseas on Dec. 10-12, her first trip abroad since the wiretapping controversy alleging election fraud broke out in June 2005.

A military spokesperson yesterday dismissed the latest coup talk as mere rumors, but admitted they were wary about a destabilization plot.

Antiriot troops were to be deployed around the Makati City court where 27 members of the Magdalo group of junior officers were due to appear Tuesday for a hearing on the coup d'etat charges they are facing over the mutiny they staged in 2003.

"We've received reports there will be attempts to spring them," said military spokesperson Lt. Col. Tristan Kison.

It was learned that three of the Magdalo's core leaders – Navy Lieutenants Antonio Trillanes IV and James Layug and Capt. Gary Alejano – had asked the court to allow them to waive their appearance yesterday. There was no official reason given.

Five other officers on trial had escaped in December and January, one after a hearing at the same court and four from detention at nearby Fort Bonifacio. The one who escaped alone, Marine Capt. Nicanor Faeldon, has since been recaptured.

"Let's show and proclaim our displeasure at the sham regime," the remaining fugitives said in a statement on Tuesday. "Let's demonstrate our disgust, not only by going to the streets in protest but also by wearing red bands on our left arms."

Kison dismissed the statement as "mere propaganda to generate a bandwagon effect."

He said there was no truth to rumors circulating in military camps that rogue troops would grab power this month.

But Emmanuel Velasco, a senior state prosecutor, told a newspaper: "The threat is very real. The police and the military are not taking any chances."

Risk consultancy Pacific Strategies & Assessments, however, said there was no evidence of an imminent threat from the Abu Sayyaf terror group which had claimed responsibility for last year's bombings.

"A repeat attack to mark the anniversary of those bombings is a theoretical possibility but there is no intelligence indicating an attack is being planned," it said in a recent client note.

Last month, the Armed Forces of the Philippines said it had uncovered the recruitment of junior officers in the field for a coup d'etat.

Kison said while the recruitment efforts have subsided, "of course we have the impression that they will not stop this activity."

He said news reports about the supposed strained relations between the President and AFP Chief of Staff Gen. Generoso Senga were part of the destabilization move.

"That's their plan, to split up the AFP so they can get the military and destabilize the government," Kison said.

"Without the support of the AFP, no destabilization move would ever succeed so they come up with letters telling the people to join them and create that bandwagon effect." *Dona Z. Pazzibugan; Reuters*

Lawyer raps Palace meddling in Erap case

By Nelson F. Flores
and Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

WITH FORMER PRESIDENT JOSEPH ESTRAda's five-year-old plunder trial nearing the homestretch, the case's chief prosecutor lashed out at Malacañang yesterday and warned President Macapagal-Arroyo's chief of staff against making statements that could put the Sandiganbayan and its proceedings under a cloud of suspicion.

Special Prosecutor Dennis Villa-Ignacio said that while his team agreed that Estrada's was a political case as well, Malacañang should not interfere in issues concerning legal matters.

"We have not interfered on political issues, that is why we are expecting them not to interfere with issues concerning the legal (aspect of the case)," Villa-Ignacio said.

He said Presidential Chief of Staff Michael Defensor's disclosure in a radio interview on Sunday that Malacañang was open to the idea of releasing Estrada temporarily would put the country's judiciary, particularly the Sandiganbayan, in a bad light.

Villa-Ignacio said "any deal that Mr. Defensor or Malacañang would enter into would only question the integrity of the proceedings of the Sandiganbayan Special Division," which is conducting the trial.

He added that while the prosecution did not oppose the efforts of the executive branch to reconcile with Estrada, the antigraft court should be allowed to do its job and the "judicial process must be preserved."

Defensor's statement came on the heels of the court's denial of a petition by Estrada to be freed on bail or transferred from detention at his rest house in Tanay, Rizal, to his home in Greenhills, San Juan, so he could prepare to take the witness stand in his own defense.

A day after saying Malacañang was open to the idea of giving Estrada temporary freedom, Defensor urged the deposed leader to apply for bail.

"The ball is now in President Estrada's hands," Defensor said in a telephone interview. "He can only get bail if he applies for it, we can't file it for him."

Defensor suggested that Estrada, to bolster his case, should tap either Iglesia ni Kristo Executive Minister Eraño Manalo or Roman Catholic Cardinal Ricardo Vidal, or both, to back his plea to be released on his own recognizance.

Defensor said the administration saw no problem with reaching a settlement with Estrada.

"This is not about the elections anymore. He wants to clear his name while the government wants to have unity," Defensor said.

Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita said he had no knowledge of the government's plans for Estrada.

"Whatever he said, I think Secretary Mike Defensor is fully aware that the case is under our judicial processes," Ermita said, reiterating the government's official hands-off stance on Estrada's case in light of the independence of the Sandiganbayan.

Meanwhile, at yesterday's hearing, the court reduced the number of hearing days from twice to once a week starting March 15 when Estrada is scheduled to give his testimony.

To compensate for the loss of time, the court's Special Division said the hearings, which are to be held on Wednesdays, would last the whole day instead of only the morning.

Senators turn docile at DOJ budget hearing

By TJ Burgonio

NO SPARKS FLEW AT THE SENATE YESTERday when senators grilled Department of Justice officials at the resumption of hearings on the P1.053-trillion 2006 national budget.

"We had been given the green light to attend so I think we had no reason not to attend," Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez told reporters after the hearing, referring to President Macapagal-Arroyo's lifting of the restrictions of Executive Order 464 for the duration of the budget hearings.

The EO bars administration, police and military officials from appearing at congressional hearings without the President's approval.

The senators themselves pulled their punches, limiting their questions to matters pertaining to the P1.2-billion budget being sought by the DOJ.

The highlight of the hearing came when the senators asked National Bureau of Investigation officials about the "Hello Garci" wiretap scandal and Solicitor General Alfredo Benipayo about the allegedly overpriced purchase by the Commission on Elections of automated counting machines *(See story on Page A1)*.

NBI officer in charge Nestor Mantaring told the senators the agency investigated the wiretapping scandal but discontinued it after learning that the two tapes presented by Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye purportedly containing conversations between President Arroyo and then Election Commissioner Virgilio Garcillano had been tampered with.

Gonzalez took the opportunity to urge the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines anew to take custody of the Garci tapes for safekeeping while the authorities looked for an independent foreign body to authenticate them.

He recalled that he made the same request to CBCP head Bishop Antonio Lagdameo at a recent meeting, but the latter expressed reservations.

"If the custody of the tapes were with me, the opposition would say I may do something to them. If the opposition had the tapes, the administration would not accept it also," Gonzalez said.

After more than three hours, the Senate committee deemed the DOJ budget submitted for approval.

"Happy Valentine, your honor[s]," a relieved Gonzalez said, eliciting laughter from the gallery.

SC may issue TRO vs EO 464

THE SUPREME COURT IS LIKELY TO TACKLE the controversial Executive Order 464 during its en banc session today.

In an interview, Ismael Khan Jr., court spokesman and assistant administrator, said the court may issue a temporary restraining order ahead of the Feb. 21 oral arguments on the issue.

"The TRO could come before the oral arguments, it has happened before in other cases. The Chief Justice shares the concern of various parties for the early resolution of this transcendental issue," Khan said. *Armand N. Nocum*

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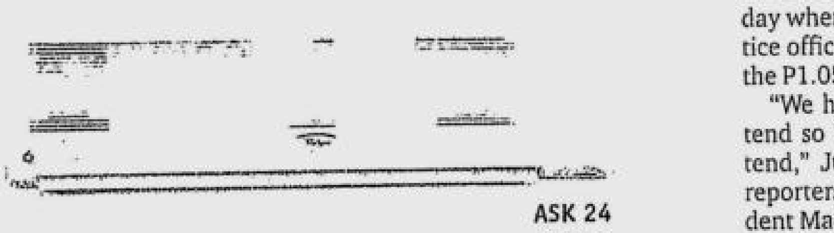

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SENSING THE DIFFERENCE

Palace fears snub, plans 'quiet' Edsa day

MALACAÑANG WILL hold a muted celebration of the 20th anniversary of the Edsa People Power revolution, with President Macapagal-Arroyo resigning herself to a possible snub by key players, specifically former President Corazon Aquino, officials said yesterday.

"President Arroyo has chosen to commemorate this special occasion quietly, without fanfare, by going to the people, looking after their needs and hearing their views," said Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye in a statement. "She will, however, be present at some of the activities planned by the commemorative committee."

Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita admitted that Malacañang had yet to finalize the events to be held between Feb. 22 and 25 and identify those that the President would attend.

Malacañang indicated it was prepared for the non-appearance of key Edsa I players.

"We have sent out invitations to all those who played a significant part in Edsa I. But we cannot impose ourselves on anybody given the situation. They have their own disposition and we cannot control their thought process," Ermita said.

Defensor said the President would be joined by former President Fidel V. Ramos at the wreath-laying, after which she would immediately leave for the provinces. *Gil C. Cabacungan Jr. and Michael Lim Ubac*

PNP bares revamp

THE PHILIPPINE NAtional Police yesterday announced a major reshuffle, with veteran investigator Chief Supt. Jesus Versoza taking over the Criminal Investigation and Detection Group.

The reshuffle will take effect within a week, outgoing police spokesperson Chief Supt. Leopoldo Bataoil said.

Versoza's current post as Southern Luzon head will be taken over by Chief Supt. Prospero Noble, who is now in Region 9.

Chief Supt. Jaime Caringal, head of the Civil Security Group, will go to Region 9.

Chief Supt. Leonardo Dionisio will leave the Cordillera Administrative Region and become head of the PNP-CSG.

Other changes include Chief Supt. Raul Gonzales will head the Cordillera Administrative Region; Senior Supt. Samuel Pagdilao will replace Bataoil as spokesperson; Bataoil will head the Northern Police District;

Chief Supt. Rene Elumbaring, head of Caraga region, will move over to Headquarters Support Service; Chief Supt. Geary Barrias will head the Caraga police; Chief Supt. Raul Bacalso will become commander of Camp Crame; Sr. Supt. Jake Cataluna will replace Bacalso as secretary at the office of the Chief of Directorial Staff.

Luige A. del Puerto

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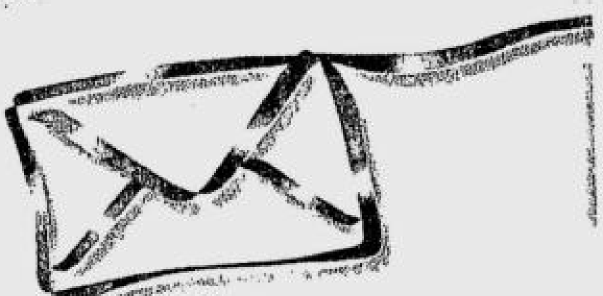

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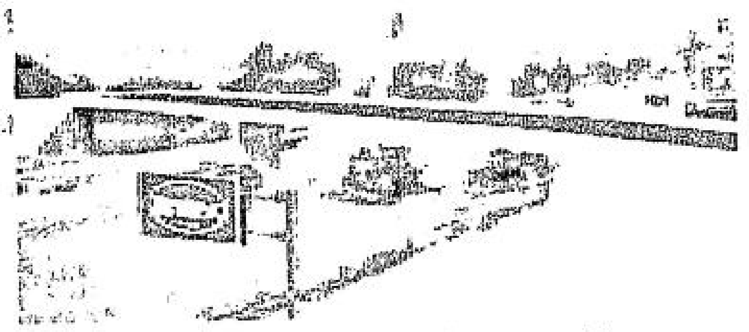
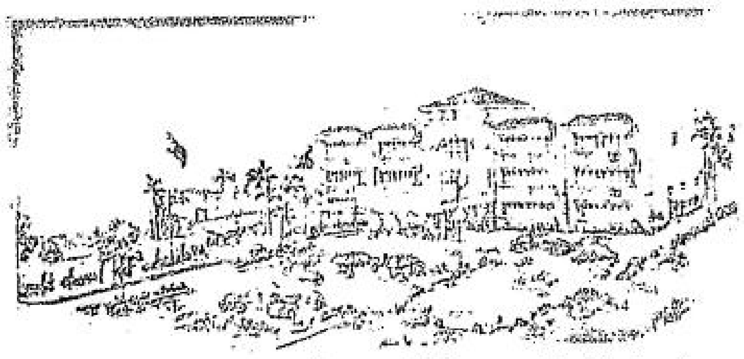
8th Charter Anniversary

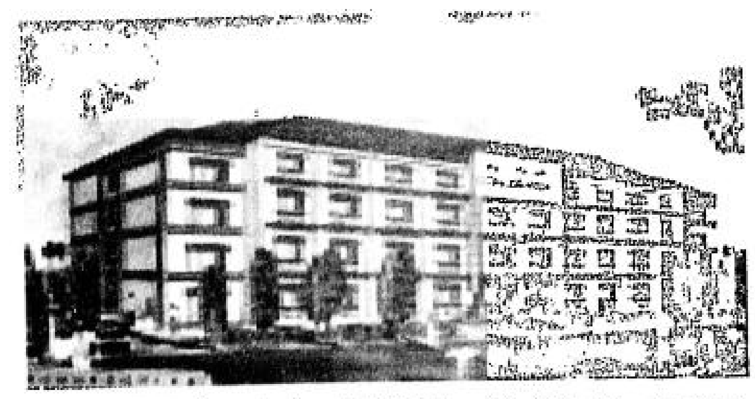
2006 Flagship Projects



The Lingunan-Lawang Bato Vehicular Overpass and Canumay Exit, which crosses the North Luzon Expressway, will be completed on May 2006. It will provide an alternate route to the Maysan-Novaliches Road and is expected to reduce traffic by almost 40%.



The new City Government Center will be completed in April 2006. The first phase of development will house the front line revenue generating offices. Among its features is a spacious and comfortable Taxpayers' Lounge, a multi-purpose hall and Day Care facilities.



The Gen. T. De Leon National High School building is a four-storey, 40 classroom facility. Since early 2005, the City Government has already constructed 140 classrooms in different public schools all over the City.

www.valenzuelacity.gov.ph

The Path to Cityhood

1623	The town of Polo was established by Father Juan Tarranco and Don Juan Monsod. The new town was carved out of Meycauayan, Bulacan, then known as Catanghalan.
July 21, 1960 -	Executive Order No. 401, signed by then President Carlos P. Garcia, divided the town of Polo into two and created the town of Valenzuela.
Sept. 11, 1963 -	Through Executive Order No. 46, the town of Polo was annexed to Valenzuela, retaining the latter name.
Feb. 27, 1975 -	Residents of the Greater Manila Area voted in favor of the integration of the four cities (Manila, Kalookan, Quezon City and Pasay City), and the thirteen municipalities (including Valenzuela) into a commission type of government.
Nov. 7, 1975 -	Presidential Decree 824, creating Metropolitan Manila was issued. This brought the separation of Valenzuela from Bulacan and its integration into Metropolitan Manila.
Aug. 7, 1995 -	Cong. Antonio Serapio filed House Bill No. 1921 seeking the conversion of the Municipality of Valenzuela into a highly urbanized city.
Feb. 14, 1998 -	**Then President Fidel V. Ramos signed Republic Act No. 8526, classifying Valenzuela as a highly urbanized city.**

MESSAGE

I greet the people and local officials of the City of Valenzuela on the occasion of your 8th year of Cityhood.

This celebration has become a tradition that is praiseworthy. Your anniversary has become a period for sharing the blessings you have received in the past year with relatives, neighbors and friends. It has also become an opportunity to strengthen communities and one another, and to thank the Lord Almighty for giving us good health and prosperity.

As you enjoy the festivities, may you continue to nurture the bayanihan spirit in your neighborhood and always work in unity and harmony among yourselves that you may attain the goals that you have set for your city.

Mabuhay kayong lahat!

Gloria Arroyo
GLORIA MACAPAGAL- ARROYO
President

MESSAGE

Eight years ago, your humble servant authored and passed into law the Cityhood of Valenzuela, inspired by the vision of a city that does not only provide sufficient basic services, but promotes a sense of belongingness and boosts the self-esteem of its people.

It is then an honor to give you a clearer path to the fulfillment of this vision, in cooperation with our City Government. Indeed, unity and dynamic leadership are the ingredients we need to attain social and economic growth for our City.

May we continue working together as a team. I am confident that this will secure greater success for our City in the years to come.

Maraming salamat, at mabuhay ang Lungsod ng Valenzuela!

ANTONIO M. SERAPIO
Deputy Minority Floor Leader

MESSAGE

After 8 years of being a highly urbanized city, where exactly is Valenzuela City headed?

The City is ready to be the country's premiere center of trade and industry.

But, becoming such requires, first and foremost, reinventing the City Government and its services to take on local and global opportunities that continue to change with the revolutions in technology and human organization.

We are reinventing local bureaucracy based on the sound principles of discipline and teamwork, and inculcating in the minds of all Valenzuelanos these core values that will steward our path to true progress. The discipline to work hard and stay focused on our mission, and teamwork to realize the vision of a Vibrant City.

We have started a revolution. A revolution of dynamic and creative governance to continue building on the gains.

Mabuhay ang Valenzuela City!

SHERWIN GATCHALIAN
City Mayor

New security setup delays 3 int'l flights

By Nikko Dizon

THREE INTERNATIONAL FLIGHTS ALMOST did not leave on time yesterday due to the new setup at the final security check at Terminal 1 of the Ninoy Aquino International Airport (Naia).

Airline sources told the INQUIRER the flights were those of Northwest and Cathay Pacific.

"They were still able to leave on time but almost didn't make it because their passengers and airline staff were caught up in the long queue caused by the new setup," the sources said.

The sources requested anonymity, citing the tension between the airlines and the Manila International Airport Authority (Miaa) arising from disagreements over new security procedures like the 100-percent sanitized luggage system and a proposed $5 security fee.

The sanitized luggage system would prevent passengers from taking their bags again after the initial X-ray check, while the airlines have argued that the security fee should be paid for by the government and not the passengers.

Both procedures have been held in abeyance pending further study.

Miaa operations chief Octavio Lina said he did not receive any complaints from the airlines about the near-delays yesterday. He said the final security check went smoothly.

In the new setup, tall wooden partitions have been placed at the two departure concourses to keep unauthorized persons out, Miaa security chief Brig. Gen. Angel Atutubo (ret.) said in a phone interview.

The barriers take up space in the already narrow walkways to the aircraft.

"We want to segregate the passengers so that no (unauthorized) persons would mix with them," Atutubo said.

Airline staff assigned to the boarding area must also line up in the passenger queue, which yesterday kept them from getting to the gates on time to help the passengers board the aircraft, the sources said.

The new setup also irked the airlines because they were unaware of its implementation.

The sources said the new setup was suggested by the US Transportation Security Authority, which is conducting its regular audit of the Naia this week.

Half of CARP lands have no individual titles

By Blanche S. Rivera

NEARLY HALF OF THE 3.5 MILlion hectares of land distributed by the government under the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program have not been titled to individual beneficiaries, the Department of Agrarian Reform said yesterday.

DAR records showed that 1.5 million hectares of lands under CARP since the program got under way in 1988 are covered by collective certificates of land ownership award (CLOAs), which need to be broken down to individual beneficiaries.

Such collective titles are shared by many CARP beneficiaries and are DAR's preferred mode of documenting land ownership because they are less tedious to prepare than individual titles.

"The collective CLOAs are meant to fast-track land distribution. It's also more practical because it ensures that the farmers cannot sell their lands," Agrarian Reform Secretary Nasser Pangandaman said in an interview yesterday.

However, both the DAR and Land Bank of the Philippines, have acknowledged that the collective titles were also one reason the government could not effectively collect amortization from tenants who have benefited from land reform. The LandBank estimates the DAR would need P2 billion to segregate individual land owners and issue them separate titles.

Pangandaman said the government did not have the budget to subdivide the collective CLOAs this year. Nonetheless, DAR planned to issue more collective titles for 130,000 hectares to be distributed this year.

As of Nov. 30, 2005, the LandBank had P40.4 billion in collectibles from farmers who still have to pay for 903,000 hectares distributed to them. Under the program, the LandBank advances payment of farmlands to be subjected to land reform to their respective owners so that the land could be parceled out to the farms' tenants.

Up to 70 percent of the 903,000 hectares was covered by collective titles, making it difficult for the LandBank to collect from individual beneficiaries.

The DAR has until 2008 to complete the acquisition and distribution of 720,000 hectares of land remaining from the original 4.2 million hectares targeted for CARP in 1988.

2.7-kg 'Gasulitos' available in Metro soon, says Petron

By Abigail L. Ho

HEEDING THE GOVERNMENT'S call to make cheaper liquefied petroleum gas available to the masses, industry leader Petron Corp. will soon deliver 2.7-kilogram Gasulitos to various Tindahan Natin locations.

Energy Secretary Raphael Lotilla said Petron was looking at eight Tindahan Natin locations, including Dagat-Dagatan, Agham Road in Quezon City, Mauway in Mandaluyong, Malibay in Pasay City, and C-5 in West Bicutan.

"Petron is moving on the LPG front and firming this up. We want to offer LPG to the poor directly," he told reporters.

Lotilla explained that with the LPG suppliers themselves making their products available in Tindahan Natin outlets, middlemen charges would be eliminated, effectively giving the poor access to cheaper LPG.

Right now, he said, households belonging to the marginalized sector relied on neighborhood dealers for their cooking gas needs.

Since these marketers got their LPG supply from bigger sellers, added charges were already imposed on the products, bloating the cost further for the end-consumers, Lotilla said.

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Cupid works overtime in RP call centers

From page A1

istop or any fast-food chain that offers breakfast," sighs Joyce, 24.

Good thing, she said, there's now even a videoke bar in the Ortigas area that opens in the early morning for the benefit of call center people.

"It was a big challenge for our relationship because, initially, he was the only one working in a call center," said Joyce, who used to be a freelance interior designer before deciding three years ago to join her husband in the same career path—and time zone.

"Now I understand his situation better," said the wife, who admitted feeling insecure during those days—and nights—when her partner was often away amid "the different culture you encounter in a call center" and she was home alone in bed.

"We were reduced to being boarders in our own house and could only talk on the phone just before dawn. It was a great sacrifice," she said.

Before their common jobs finally put them in sync, their communication deteriorated to one-liner "hellos" via text messages. He came home in the morning just when she was about to leave for her day job, and they could only go out on "real" dates during his days off, Joyce said.

Daytime dating

But now, at least they're back solidly as a couple on an after-office stroll. The only difference being: "We have to be home and asleep by around 3 p.m.," she said.

Of course, there are "advantages" to daytime dating, smiled Ricci de los Reyes, a supervisor at Teletec, a call center based in Pasay City.

"You can avoid the big crowds since you are the first to enter the malls and catch the day's first movie screenings," said Ricci, boyfriend to Andrea, a former officemate who is now with another call center.

Another hassle-free aspect is the ride home after the date. While the rest of the rat race gets stuck in traffic jams on the way to offices and factories, call center employees find themselves taking the opposite less-congested routes, Ricci noted.

Ricci observed that "it's easier to fall in love with someone who is also working in (this) same industry. Your expectations from each other get cleared up right away."

In fact, before he and Andrea went steady, they started out as rivals for a promotion and "hardly spoke" to each other. Eventually, they found a common path to their hearts just the same.

Only abnormal thing

"I'm confident we can continue with this lifestyle," said Ricci, who intends to marry Andrea in April.

Perhaps the schedule is about "the only abnormal thing" about having a lover or suitor working in a call center, according to Cheska Javier, an assistant manager in another Makati-based center.

If one is in a regular 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. office job and the other does a 9 p.m. to 6 a.m. shift in a call center, "that means you just have this window between 6 a.m. and 8 a.m." for trysts or courtship, she said.

And what about sex? "Margie," wife of a call center night owl and mother of one, said it's all about seizing the opportunity during her husband's day off or (on weekdays) engaging in what the adventurous would knowingly refer to as "afternoon delights."

Romance aside, though, there must be some other things "abnormal" about working in a caffeine-charged environment tailor-fit for insomniacs.

Breakfast is like dinner

As Joyce put it, "we take breakfast (after leaving work in the morning) but our bodies somewhat feel like it's dinner."

That's because break time for call center workers on the night shift is strangely referred to as "lunch" even though it's taken at around 3 a.m., she said.

"You miss prime time shows on TV, games, evening concerts and all that. You rev up for the night's work with coffee and more coffee," said Christopher Marasigan, an operations manager at Teletec, who together with Christopher met with the INQUIRER at around 11 p.m. at a Starbucks near their office.

New recruits assigned to the graveyard shift complain of headaches before their bodies finally make the adjustment, he said. Pregnant women are moved to the day shift.

The majority acquire the smoking habit. "Nicotine helps keep you awake," Ricci said, himself halfway through a cigarette during the interview.

Morning beer

For young, single male employees in their 20s like himself, there are 24-hour convenience stores where cold beer can be had in the morning. He has gotten used to having a for-the-road tipple with his buddies by midday that having an occasional drink in the evening "now makes me drunk much quicker."

But for every Joyce and Paul, or Ricci and Andrea, who proudly declare love's triumph in the seemingly haywire world of call centers, there are others who prefer to speak in whispers about the scandalous side of it all.

"Angel," 22, said she had just been to one of the weirdest office assemblies on Saturday, when her Manila-based call center held a "talk" in time for Valentine's Day. The reason: Management was "concerned" about the alarming cases of infidelity among the office workers.

She said the company owner himself spoke for about 45 minutes before the 100-plus agents who made up the staff to stress that he personally "values morality more than all the profits we can bring to the company."

Unwanted pregnancies

Angel said she had about 10 female coemployees who were on leave because of "unwanted pregnancies" from extramarital affairs, some with their team leaders or supervisors who had families of their own.

Angel, who currently has a boyfriend not working in a call center, said she herself was being courted by an older married coworker.

His wooing, she said, comes leeringly with some kind of assurance that "it's supposedly a natural thing in call centers to have a lover while you're inside and another one outside, both at the same time."

"*Para lang daw masaya* (Just for a little happiness)," she told the INQUIRER.

Asked what she thought made her call center prone to such indecent overtures and liaisons, Angel said: "When you're in one, you tend to spend more time with your coworkers than with your family or partner. You practically have a life nowhere else but there."

DR. MIKE Turvill: modern-day wizard

Recipe for love

Ingredients

12 drops ylang-ylang essential oil
8 drops lavender essential oil
4 drops patchouli essential oil
60 ml carrier oil (grapeseed oil, jojoba oil or virgin coconut oil)

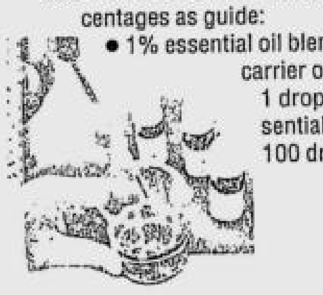
Procedure

In a 100ml beaker or any glassware, gently add essential oils to carrier oil and mix. Transfer massage oil to final container and label.

To make the love potion stronger, increase the amount of essential oils. Use following percentages as guide:

- 1% essential oil blend to carrier oil (or 1 drop essential oil to 100 drops carrier oil) makes a weak blend.
- 2% essential oil blend to carrier oil makes a stronger blend.
- 2.5% essential oil blend to carrier oil makes a maximum blend.

Note: 20 drops is equivalent to 1 ml. And don't go overboard, lest you risk turning your love potion to poison.



Briton teaches how to make love potions

From page A1

in rose water and its sails soaked in the heady fragrance of henna flower or camphire.

One whiff of the heady smells and Mark Antony, Rome's best-known warrior, was seduced. Cleopatra knew she had established the desired connection.

As a final coup de grâce, she washed her hair in jasmine (a strong aphrodisiac), burned kyphi incense—a soothing compound of cinnamon, spikenard, peppermint, juniper and myrrh—to create an exotic atmosphere and wore a garland of fresh fragrant flowers. It was a knockout score for Egypt.

Turvill told his audience, which included a pediatrician, a dermatologist's assistant and a spa manager, that aromatic oils, facial scrubs and even shampoos could be blended into love potions to achieve that "love-is-in-the-air" ambience.

Turvill said the most potent aphrodisiac oils were made from the expensive sandalwood and jasmine. He was smitten himself by the scent of a Filipina who wore sandalwood.

For a special love potion (see box), he chose to combine the essential oils of the indigenous *ylang-ylang* flower, patchouli herb, and the commonly grown lavender. The three oils are known for their romantic properties and blended together can be used as massage oil, linen spray or body scrub.

Turvill said blending two or more oils would produce a synergistic effect that could not be reproduced by synthetic or artificial compounds.

He warned: "A love potion is for improving health, not otherwise. The modern-day wizard applies the science of aromatherapy—not magic spells—to achieve the desired result without the harmful side effects."

Concentrated essential oils, he said, are for sniffing, not for swallowing or applying directly to the skin.

Inhalation is the fastest way for the body to absorb essential oils. Oil molecules travel up the nose, sending a message to the brain and nerves, which respond to the new smell. From the nose, the oil molecules enter the bloodstream via lungs and respiratory system.

Since pure essential oils are volatile, they should be kept away from extreme heat, Turvill said. They are best stored in dark-colored, tightly sealed glass bottles but not in plastic containers. Dioxin, the carcinogenic chemical that makes plastic pliable, often leeches into oil, creating toxins which should not get into the body.

In contrast, massage oil blends of the recommended formula can be applied to the skin, Turvill explained. Because essential oil molecules are so small, a massage oil blend can enter the tiny pores of the skin, through the hair follicles, sweat glands and blood capillaries, transported in body by the circulatory system.

To learn more about how to concoct love and other potions, visit www.spaessentials.com.ph or call Tel. No. 838 2170.

Fancy meals, chocolates for lovers all over Asia

From page A1

cash gifts from older relatives.

Many prices in China have been set to feature the numbers 8 and 9, which signify prosperity and longevity in Chinese belief.

The Shangri-La Hotel in Shanghai's towering Pudong District is offering a Valentine special costing 88,888 yuan, while the Portman Ritz-Carlton has a 188,888-yuan package.

In Zhengzhou city, a newspaper reported that one restaurant is offering a 99,999 yuan "Emperor-style" dinner—complete with Chinese, French, Japanese and Korean food. And a personal nutritionist. And a live band.

"How much money do we earn in a year?" one couple told the paper. "We can't stop eating for two years to save up for it."

Diamond-studded cake

Even without the 8s and 9s, the numbers are adding up in Tokyo, where Takashimaya department store is selling a 500-million-yen ($4.2-million) chocolate cake decorated with 107 diamonds.

The confection comes in the shape of a musical score, showing the notes for Mozart's "Turkish March" to commemorate the 250th anniversary of the composer's birth.

If you're not ready to go that far, Matsuzakaya in the upscale central Tokyo area of Ginza invited chocolatier Michel Chaudun from Paris on the eve of the big day.

"As the chocolatier himself was at the shop and as I love black chocolates, I decided to buy them for my husband and my father. Of course I'll eat most of them," said housewife Naomi Hayashi.

"Our customers are getting very knowledgeable about chocolates and they tend to enjoy them for themselves. So we prepared good ones that can amuse our female customers," said a company spokesperson.

In a Japanese twist, men are expected to reciprocate by buying women chocolate a month later on "White Day," in what cynics see as a chance for the candy business to cash in on two holidays.

Chocolates also take pride of place in South Korea, where department stores, gift shops and flower shops are filling their aisles with sweet treats in anticipation of a buying surge by young lovers.

Right-wing ideas

Valentine's Day has also been embraced in India, but some right-wing political groups have other ideas.

"It is crass commercialization for (greeting) card companies who do business worth two billion rupees ($45 million) on this day," said Jai Bhagwan Goel of the hardline Shiv Sena party.

"We are going to oppose it in a big way. Our protest is against the culture of nudity and obscenity. We know of cases where young men use the festival as an excuse to misbehave with women."

In Australia, the national postal service has released a rose-scented stamp to coax people into returning to that lost art form, the love letter.

Rose-scented stamp

"Sending an SMS or e-mail doesn't have the same impact as a card you choose personally and accompany with a hand-written message of love," Australia Post spokesperson Noel Leahy said.

"The value of a heartfelt love letter and scented stamp is priceless."

And if love doesn't work out, a support group in Shanghai will mark Valentine's Day with the launch of the Divorce Club. Around 135 men and women have already joined, and will be celebrating the end of their marriages.

Despite the expensive trappings of romance, China's divorce rate in 2004 was up more than 21 percent.

AFP, AP

Cheney accidentally shoots fellow hunter in Texas

From page A1

he was spending time with me in my living room," said hospital administrator Peter Banko, who visited Whittington.

Banko said Whittington was in the intensive care unit because his condition warranted it, but he didn't elaborate. Whittington sent word through a hospital official that he would have no comment on the incident out of respect for Cheney.

The accident occurred Saturday at a ranch in south Texas where the vice president and several companions were hunting quail. It was not reported publicly by the vice president's office for nearly 24 hours, and then only after it was reported locally by the Corpus Christi Caller-Times on its website on Sunday.

28-gauge shotgun

Katharine Armstrong, the ranch owner, said Sunday that Cheney was using a 28-gauge shotgun and that Whittington was about 30 meters away when he was hit in the cheek, neck and chest.

Each of the hunters was wearing a bright orange vest at the time, Armstrong told reporters at the ranch about 100 km southwest of Corpus Christi. She said Whittington was "alert and doing fine."

"He is very, very lucky that nothing seriously was injured," Sally Whittington said in a story in Sunday's online edition of The Dallas Morning News. She said her father was being observed because of swelling from some of the welts on his neck.

"It looks like chicken pox, kind of," she said of her father's face.

Armstrong told The Associated Press that emergency personnel traveling with Cheney tended to Whittington before an ambulance—routinely on call because of the vice president's presence—took him to a hospital in Kingsville. From there, Whittington was flown by helicopter to Corpus Christi about 65 km away.

Cheney's spokesperson, Lea Anne McBride, said the vice president met with Whittington at the hospital on Sunday. Cheney "was pleased to see that he's doing fine and in good spirits," she said.

Armstrong said she was watching from a car while Cheney, Whittington and another hunter got out of the vehicle to shoot at a covey of quail.

Whittington shot a bird and went to retrieve it in the tall grass, while Cheney and the third hunter walked to another spot and discovered a second covey.

Whittington "came up from behind the vice president and the other hunter and didn't signal them or indicate to them or announce himself," Armstrong said.

"The vice president didn't see him," she continued. "The covey flushed and the vice president picked out a bird and was following it and shot. And by god, Harry was in the line of fire and got peppered pretty good."

Whittington has been a private practice attorney in Austin since 1950 and has long been active in Texas Republican politics. He's been appointed to several state boards, including when then Gov. George W. Bush named him to the Texas Funeral Service Commission.

Very apologetic

McBride said the vice president's office did not tell reporters about the accident on Saturday because they were deferring to Armstrong to handle the announcement of what happened on her property. Armstrong called the local paper about the incident on Sunday.

Armstrong, owner of the Armstrong Ranch where the accident occurred, said Whittington was bleeding after he was shot and Cheney was very apologetic.

"It broke the skin," she said of the shotgun pellets. "It knocked him silly. But he was fine. He was talking. His eyes were open. It didn't get in his eyes or anything like that.

"Fortunately, the vice president has got a lot of medical people around him and so they were right there and probably more cautious than we would have been," she said. "The vice president has got an ambulance on call, so the ambulance came."

Cheney is an avid hunter who makes annual trips to South Dakota to hunt pheasants. He also travels frequently to Arkansas to hunt ducks, among other places.

Longtime friend

Armstrong said Cheney was a longtime friend who comes to the ranch to hunt about once a year and was "a very safe sportsman." She said Whittington was a regular, too, but she thought it was the first time the two men hunted together.

"This is something that happens from time to time. You know, I've been peppered pretty well myself," said Armstrong.

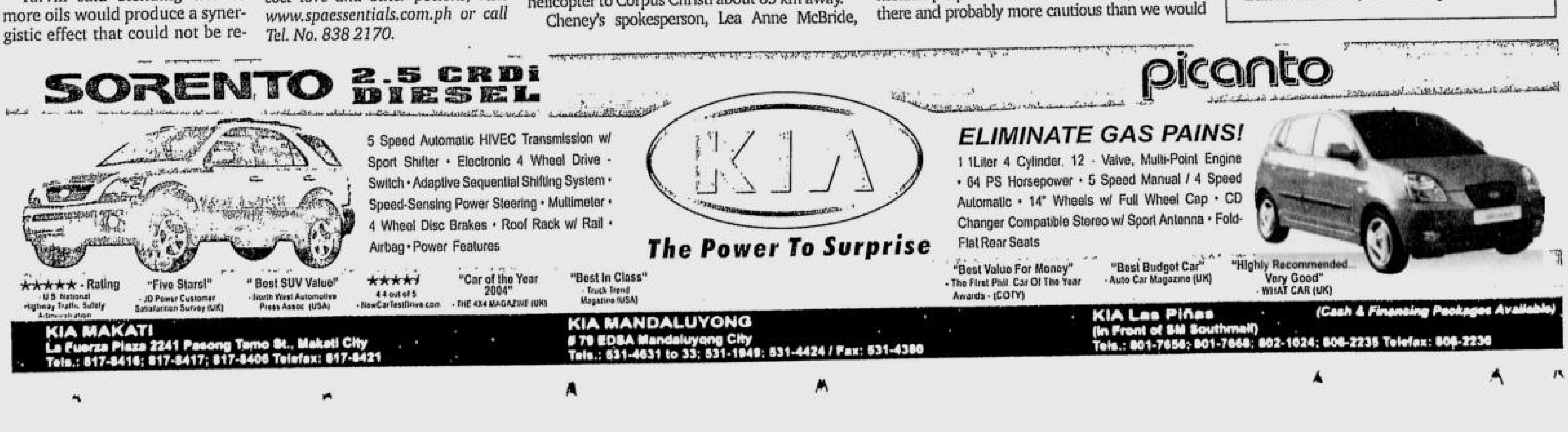
The 20,000-hectare Armstrong ranch has been in the influential south Texas family since the turn of the last century. Katharine is the daughter of Tobin Armstrong, a politically connected rancher who has been a guest at the White House and spent 48 years as director of the Texas and Southwestern Cattle Raisers Association. He died in October last year. Cheney was among the dignitaries who attended his funeral.

Cheney was legally hunting with a license he purchased in November last year, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department spokesperson Steve Lightfoot said. The vice president flew back to Washington on Sunday evening, according to his office.

AP

Correction

IN THE CAPTION of the photo of the winning tandem in the Konica Minolta National Pro-Am golf championship in the Sports section of Feb. 11, the first names of the winning pro, Gerard Cantada, and the tournament presenter, Edilberto Bravo, were misspelled.



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Pasig cop chief, 6 PDEA men axed over shabu bust

From page A1

Supt. Raul Medina for command responsibility and for not being able to prevent "one of the biggest embarrassments" to the police.

"Yes ... today," Querol told the INQUIRER when asked to confirm reports that he had relieved the Pasig police commander.

Another police official said he had learned of Medina's relief but a formal order had yet to be issued. The official asked not to be named because he was not authorized to speak.

Medina refused to answer his mobile phone when the INQUIRER tried to reach him.

The sacking of Medina and the six PDEA agents brought to 26 the number of people axed in the wake of the discovery on Friday of a community of drug dens a few hundred meters away from the Pasig police headquarters.

Police yesterday filed charges against majority of the 313 arrested in the raid, while recommending the release of 99 others.

"There is a possibility that it can be happening in other parts, especially in Metro Manila," Philippine National Police Director General Arturo Lomibao told reporters in Dagupan City on Sunday, referring to the operation of the Pasig drug dens. "If they can operate in that long period, there's a possibility that some police officers are in cahoots."

The six PDEA agents sacked will be the subject of an internal inquiry to determine whether they had been negligent in their duties or worse—involved in running the so-called "one-stop shop" for shabu users.

"The drug den could not have lasted this long without the cooperation of corrupt police officials and men," PDEA Director General Anselmo Avenido said in a statement.

The PDEA identified the relieved officers as SPO2 Arsenio Gregorio Jr., SPO2 Oscar Rudas, SPO1 Tomas Calicdan, PO3 Eleonito Apduhan, PO2 Felino Sumaoang and PO2 Ramil Policarpio.

The agency exercises operational supervision over all drug units of the PNP, the National Bureau of Investigation and the Bureau of Customs.

Querol said the district police had wrapped up its investigation and submitted its report to him.

Querol said the investigation focused on why and how the drug enclave was able to operate, and on the performance of Medina.

He said the local police had long known of the existence of drug activities in Sitio Mapayapa in Barangay Sto. Tomas and even conducted 16 antidrug operations there last year, filing cases against those arrested.

"The mere fact that they have conducted raids on that place on several occasions ... would indicate that they had fair knowledge that there (were) illegal drug (activities) being performed there," Querol said.

"Nonetheless, it still existed ... It's totally embarrassing for everybody."

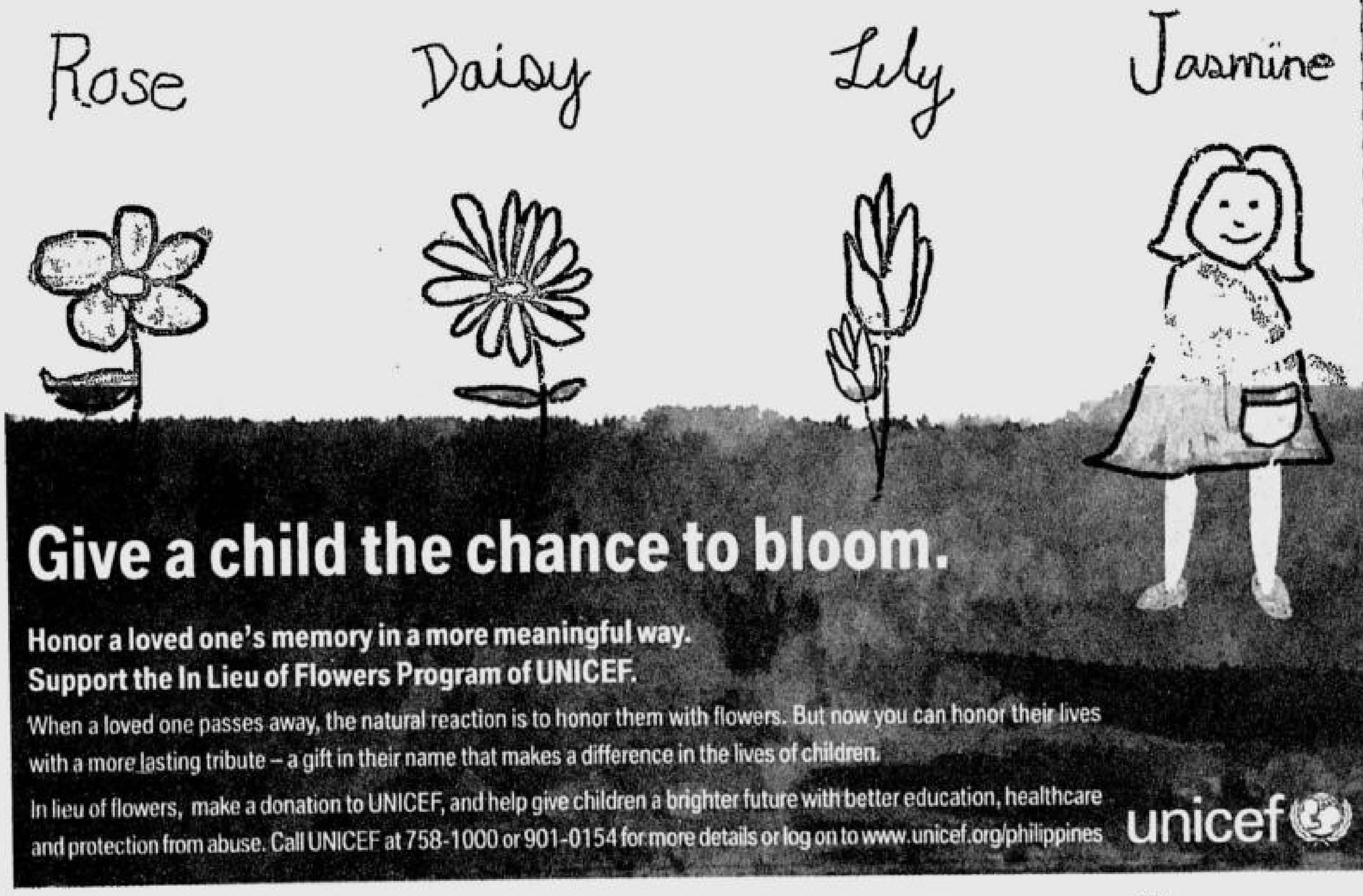
Querol, who had earlier sacked seven members of the police precinct in the area and 12 antidrug agents of the city and district, indicated that district officials might also be investigated to see how far the liability went.

Director Marcelo Ele of the Anti-Illegal Drugs Special Operations Task Force said the 99 recommended for release included those who tested negative for shabu traces.

"The sad part is the presence during the raid of grandparents, young professionals, children and members of affluent families from outside of Pasig City," Ele said. "This is a clear indication that the place is a well-known drug enclave but was surprisingly sustained to operate clandestinely for years."

A total of 148 people have been charged with drug use, two with drug pushing, and 28 with maintaining drug dens in the prosecutor's office.

Twenty-eight people were charged with possession of illegal drugs and 23 with possession of drug paraphernalia. Two persons were charged with illegal possession of firearms. *With reports from Yolanda Sotelo-Fuertes, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau, and Philip C. Tubeza*



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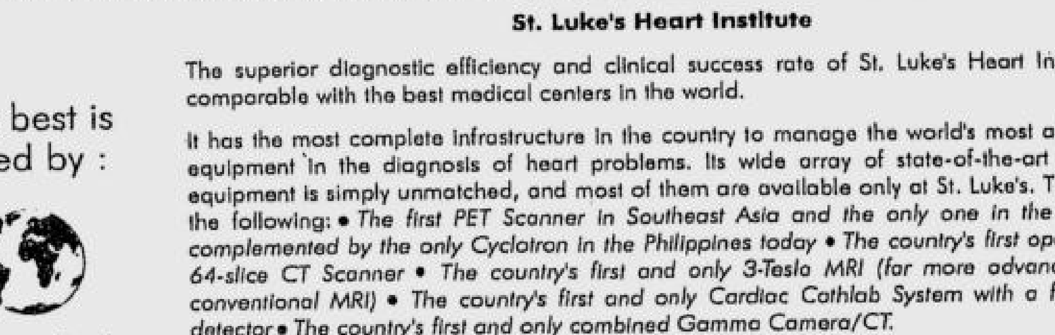

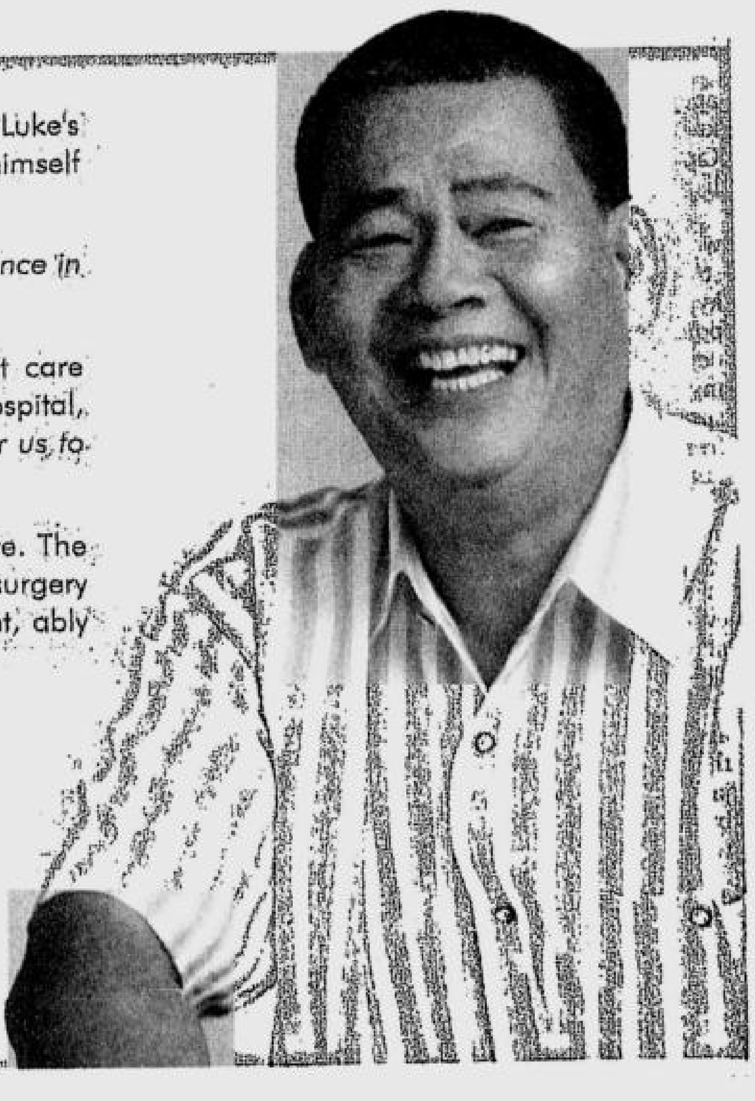

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The WORLD

Editor **Luverne B. Gueco**

UN chief seeks talks as protests escalate

ISTANBUL—TENS OF THOUSANDS OF TURKS Sunday took part in protests over cartoons of the Prophet Mohammed, as United Nations chief Kofi Annan urged calm and an end to "megaphone diplomacy."

In an interview with Danish public television, Annan called for dialogue in the uproar marked by violent demonstrations, blazing embassies and death threats against citizens of Denmark where the caricatures were first published in September.

He said on the eve of a meeting with US President George W. Bush that "we also need to deescalate, we need less megaphone diplomacy and I think we should turn off the megaphone and begin to talk quietly to each other."

The UN secretary general also said he found the prophet caricatures "offensive in the sense that they are dealing with a religion that has over a billion followers around the world."

While more than 50,000 Turks took to the streets, the Arab League also called for cool heads to prevail even as the United States' top diplomat suggested the most extreme displays of Muslim fury were orchestrated by oppressive regimes.

Danes have accused radical *imams* of whipping up the controversy by circulating the cartoons in Muslim countries, along with more offensive drawings that never appeared in the Jyllands-Posten newspaper.

Some of the cartoons were later reprinted in newspapers across the world, from Norway to France, Yemen, Jordan, the US and New Zealand.

"Let me say that I also support freedom of speech ... But that freedom of expression and opinion also should come with some responsibility, should come with some judgment," Annan said.

Arab League head Amr Mussa told an economic forum in the Saudi city of Jeddah that a confrontation between East and West had to be avoided.

"We Muslims who want positive relations with the West, let's put our hands into the hands of our like-minded brothers in Europe and America—and they are many—so that we can put out the vicious flame," he said. *AFP*

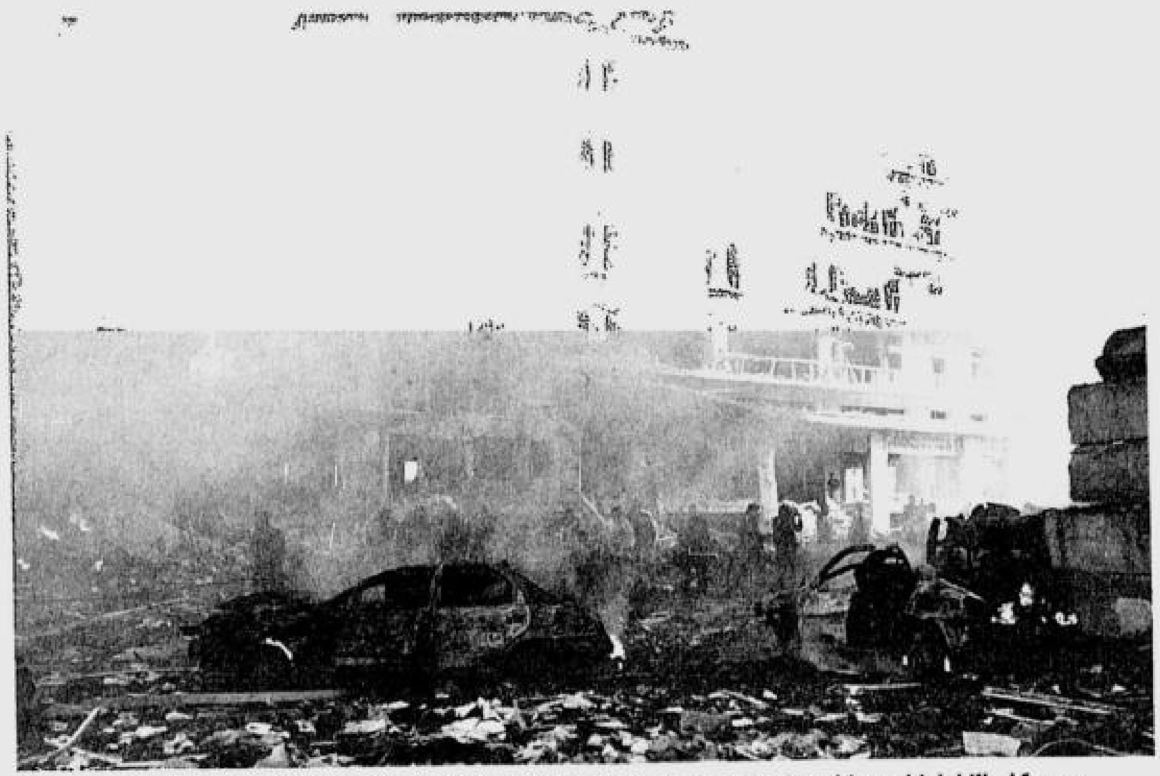

PHOTO dated Feb. 14, 2005 shows cars burning at the site of a massive bombing which killed fomer Lebanese Prime Minister Rafiq Hariri and 20 other people in the heart of Beirut. AFP

Lebanon somber, worried about future as it marks anniversary of Hariri slay

BEIRUT, LEBANON—VALENTINE'S Day in Lebanon has a somber tone this year. Although most gift and flower shops are decorated in themes of red and white, the date of the holiday was changed and some Lebanese are not even celebrating it as the nation marks the one-year anniversary of the assassination of former Premier Rafik Hariri.

"Nobody is in the mood. They've spoilt this day for us forever," said Lama Abdo, a 28-year-old teacher browsing in one gift shop at a mall this week.

An air of despondency and concern for the future marks the first anniversary of the Feb. 14, 2005, truck bombing that killed Lebanon's most prominent politician—an event that shook Lebanon and quickly forced the Syrian Army to withdraw.

Hariri's assassination was followed by a string of smaller bomb attacks that have killed or wounded a number of anti-Syrian personalities, forcing others, including Hariri's son and political heir, Saad, to leave. Political divisions have translated into street violence on at least two occasions in the past month.

"The only good thing that came out of the assassination is that the Syrians left," said Mohammed Abu Merhi, a 20-year-old graphic design student. "Otherwise it's been a year of death and destruction."

High optimism in the wake of the Syrian withdrawal, the first parliamentary elections free of Syrian intervention and a UN investigation into the murder has given way to frustration, disappointment and anxiety as the government has failed to uncover the culprits behind the bombings.

Capturing such realities, a sketch on the political satire program, "Basmet Watan"—a play on words which in Arabic translates into both "Smiles of a Nation" and "When a Nation Died"—aired on LBC TV, shows Saad Hariri finally returning to live in Lebanon after remnants of the Syrian-controlled intelligence services are no longer active. Hariri, 35, is shown completely white-haired and leaning on a cane upon his return 50 years later.

Hariri did return to Beirut on Sunday—after months of self-exile in Saudi Arabia and France—to take part in what were expected to be massive demonstrations Tuesday on the first anniversary of his father's killing.

Mindful of the mood, many restaurants and clubs agreed among themselves to move up celebrations on Valentine's Day to the preceding weekend. But Abdo, the school teacher, said she will not be celebrating anyway. *AP*

Prosecutors charge ex-Livedoor CEO

HORIE AFP

TOKYO—TAKAFUMI HORIE, THE former chief of Internet company Livedoor Co. who shook up corporate Japan with his aggressive business tactics, was charged on Monday with violating securities laws, Japanese media reported.

Horie was arrested on Jan. 23, just months after running unsuccessfully for parliament as a ruling party poster boy for reform, on suspicion of trying to boost share prices by spreading false information, issuing new shares to "acquire" firms already under his control and then selling them for a profit to pad Livedoor's books.

Media reports said Horie, 33, has denied any illegal actions.

The reports said Livedoor was also charged with breaking securities law, as were three others: former Livedoor chief financial officer Ryoji Miyauchi, former Livedoor director Fumito Okamoto, and former executive Osanari Nakamura.

The case exposed the inadequacy of the Tokyo Stock Exchange's trading systems, prompted loud calls for a beefed-up securities watchdog, and embarrassed Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi because ruling party executives backed Horie in a failed bid for a seat in parliament last September. *Reuters*

US House probe faults gov't-wide failings over slow Katrina response

WASHINGTON—UNHEEDED warnings, poor planning and apathy in recognizing the scope of Hurricane Katrina's destruction led to the slow emergency response from the White House down to local parishes, a House investigation concludes.

The 600-page report by a special Republican-dominated House inquiry into one of the worst natural disasters in US history concluded that late state and local evacuation orders exacerbated an untrained and inexperienced force of federal emergency responders.

It also said President George W. Bush received poor and incomplete counsel about the crisis unfolding in the Gulf Coast.

Overall, the House report said, the federal government's response to Katrina was marked by "fecklessness, flailing and organizational paralysis."

"Our investigation revealed that Katrina was a national failure, an abdication of the most solemn obligation to provide for the common welfare," said a summary of the scathing report obtained Sunday by The Associated Press.

"At every level—individual, corporate, philanthropic, and governmental—we failed to meet the challenge that was Katrina," the report concluded.

The House findings mark the first of two congressional inquiries and a White House review of the storm response expected over the next six weeks. *AP*

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WORLDBRIEFS

Calm urged over EU bird flu outbreak

ROME—Governments urged calm on Sunday after H5N1 bird flu made its first appearance in wild birds on European Union soil, while Nigeria was testing what could be the first humans to be infected with the deadly virus in Africa. News on Saturday that Greece and Italy had found swans with highly pathogenic H5N1 confirmed the arrival in the EU of a virus that has killed at least 88 people in Asia and the Middle East and forced the culling of millions of birds. The virus claimed two more human lives in Indonesia, raising to 18 the number of deaths in the country from bird flu, a health ministry official said on Sunday. Further suspected outbreaks in birds were reported, with EU member Slovenia saying it had sent samples of avian influenza H5 found in a swan to Britain for further tests to see if it was of the highly pathogenic variety. European officials tried to reassure people, stressing there had been no human cases reported in their region. *Reuters*

Northeast US hammered by record blizzard

BOSTON—The biggest snowstorm of the season belted northeastern United States on Sunday, sinking New York City into its deepest snow on record, cutting power to thousands of homes, closing airports but bringing joy to ski resorts. "Make no mistake about it, this is a very dangerous, big storm," New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg told a news conference. At least 26.9 inches of snow fell in New York's Central Park, topping a powerful blizzard on Dec. 26, 1947, that killed 77 people, according to the National Weather Service and city archives. There were few fatalities by late Sunday as people heeded storm warnings and stayed inside. Authorities said one man died when his truck slid off a Virginia highway and another was killed in a fire in Baltimore when snow hampered rescue teams. Whiteout conditions delayed flights and trains and shut airports in New York and New Jersey, the Federal Aviation Administration and the Amtrak rail service said, as the storm churned up the northeast coast from Virginia to Maine. *Reuters*

Berlusconi to lose polls, survey says

ROME—The campaign for Italy's general election kicked off with Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi contesting the accuracy of opinion polls that indicate he will lose to Romano Prodi's center-left. Italy's president dissolved parliament on Saturday, raising the curtain on a campaign that looks set to be one of the most acrimonious in Italy's post-war history. The April 9-10 election will pit Berlusconi at the head of his incumbent "House of Freedoms" center-right coalition against Prodi's "The Union" alliance, which ranges from hard-line Communist parties to centrist Roman Catholic groups. *AFP*

Iraqi Shiites select Jaafari as PM

BAGHDAD—Iraq's dominant Shiite alliance on Sunday narrowly voted for current Premier Ibrahim Jaafari as its candidate for prime minister in the country's first permanent post-Saddam Hussein government. In a sign of divisions within the United Iraqi Alliance (UIA), however, Jaafari won 64 votes in the movement's ballot to defeat Vice President Adel Abdel Mahdi by just a single vote following weeks of wrangling. His appointment is to be formally sealed by a new three-member presidential council due to be selected by two-thirds of the 275-member parliament when it sits in the next two weeks. Jaafari's 10-month term has been marked by a persistent insurgency, something he said he would continue to tackle in his next term. *AFP*

Most Pinoys believe in lifetime partners–SWS

MOST FILIPINOS REMAIN ROmantic at heart, believing they are destined to be with one partner for life, a survey released Monday showed.

The survey by independent pollster Social Weather Stations found that 85 percent of adult Filipinos believe there is one person they are destined to be with, while only 15 percent said they did not believe so.

Of the 85 percent, 70 percent said they had found that person, while 14 percent said they had not. Eighty-two percent of those who had not yet found their lifetime partners were "still hoping" to find that special someone, SWS said.

The survey also found that their husbands, wives or partners topped the list of persons that respondents said they were destined to be with.

The survey of 1,200 adult Filipinos was done from Nov. 27 to Dec. 5, with a margin of error of plus or minus 3 percentage points. *AP*

RP credit image boosted

From page A1

agers led by then Finance Secretary Cesar Purisima resigned.

Sustain gains

Fitch said the full implementation of the 12-percent VAT was expected to sustain the fiscal gains made last year, when the government's budget deficit dropped to 2.7 percent of gross domestic product (GDP). It estimated that the deficit-to-GDP ratio would further fall to 2.1 percent this year.

"This will allow the government debt/GDP ratio to continue its downward trajectory, alleviating pressure on sovereign credit worthiness as debt ratios gradually compare more favorably with rating peer group medians," McCormack said in a statement.

The budget deficit last year stood at P146.5 billion, lower than the official ceiling of P180 billion. The better than programmed fiscal performance was a result of tighter spending and higher income by the national treasury, which collects dividends from state-owned firms and invests in sovereign instruments.

While believing that short-term prospects for the Philippines will be rosy, Fitch said challenges to the completion of the fiscal reform agenda remained. It remained to be seen whether tax collection-raising measures like the new VAT law would indeed make the Philippine government's revenues at par with those of its neighbors.

"Even with the VAT in place, government revenue relative to GDP is the second-lowest of all rated sovereigns, and it is yet unclear how or whether it will increase to meet mounting spending pressures, which we believe to be forthcoming," McCormack said.

Impeachment

He said the government should undertake more fiscal reform measures to prevent downward pressure on the country's credit rating.

Fitch also warned that "political developments could still affect credit worthiness," citing continuing efforts to revise the Constitution that could displace other legislative initiatives, and a likely revival of the opposition's efforts to impeach President Macapagal-Arroyo on charges that she cheated to win the May 2004 elections.

Fitch believed renewed impeachment proceedings could cast doubt on the "plausible" tenure of Ms Arroyo. It said destabilizing events could reduce tax collection or disrupt financial markets, with possible implications for public debt service.

Fair assessment

Bangko Sentral Governor Amando Tetangco Jr. said Fitch had made "a fair assessment that's in line with market sentiment and expectations."

Ms Arroyo said the job for the Philippines was by no means over.

"We have to pay and collect more taxes in order for fiscal reforms to bear fruit in our budget. This is why I urge everybody to pay proper taxes to sustain the rising confidence of investors in the Philippines," a cheerful President said in a television forum.

Finance Secretary Margarito Teves said the government welcomed the improved outlook by Fitch.

"Like those of S&P's and CalPERS (California Public Employees Retirement System), Fitch's assessment reflects increasing investor confidence and favorable market sentiment," Teves said.

But he said there was no room for complacency.

Investments

Wilshire Associates, the consulting firm of CalPERS, the biggest pension fund in the United States, recently raised the Philippines' ranking among 26 other emerging markets, moving the country up to 14th place from 18th last year, besting Malaysia, China, Russia and India.

Fitch noted that investments in the Philippines remained the lowest in Asia.

The ratings firm said the amount of investment that the Philippines corners, equivalent to between 15 percent and 16 percent of GDP was not sufficient to increase the country's economic growth in the medium term to levels that will reverse the declining per capita income.

National Treasurer Omar Cruz said the "stable" outlook by Fitch was consistent with the assessment of the market on the Philippines. He noted that prices of Philippine bonds had been tightening even before the "stable" outlook by Fitch and Standard & Poor's.

"Two stable outlooks versus one (negative by Moody's) confirms bullish outlook for the country," said Marcelo Ayes, chief foreign exchange dealer at Equitable PCI Bank.

Francis Varela, president of AB Capital Securities, agreed that the two-to-one score among the world's most influential rating agencies bode well for the Philippines.

Roland Avante, treasurer at Chinatrust Commercial Bank Philippines, said the market had digested the good news, noting that fresh improvements in Philippine global bond pricing were due to the generally favorable sentiment on emerging markets.

"Moody's negative outlook no longer affects the market because in a nutshell, they're saying they are just taking a precautionary stance and would like to see fiscal developments to further solidify," Avante said.

The European Union's ambassador to the Philippines, Jan de Kok, was upbeat on the Philippines, especially with the improvement in debt ratings outlook.

"I think the prospects for the Philippines are enormous. The confidence that will emerge from that is going to encourage investors from anywhere in the world and from Europe to yet take a look at the Philippines and that could translate to a further upsurge in the economy," De Kok said. *With a report from Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.*

Comelec deal 'overpriced' by ₱500M

From page A1

ed the Comelec contract with MegaPacific for being tainted "with graft and legal infirmities." It discovered that the Comelec's own technical specifications for the voting machines were not followed.

Benipayo said he did not submit the bank documents to the high court when it considered the case. Instead, he informally informed one of the justices about the documents.

Drilon grilled Benipayo on his apparent error, pointing out that it might be improper to talk with a justice about a case that was pending in the high court.

"Why did you not bring this to the attention of the Supreme Court?" Drilon asked.

Benipayo was silent for a moment before repeating the question thrown at him: "Why did I not bring it to the attention of the Supreme Court?"

"Yes," Drilon said. "Officially, through a pleading."

"At that time, it was already submitted for decision," Benipayo finally answered.

Still pending

But Drilon said the "mere fact that it was submitted for decision" meant that "it was still pending resolution."

"And this is a public interest case. It would have served the public interest if you submitted these documents to the Supreme Court through a formal pleading. Would you not agree?" Drilon said.

Benipayo replied: "Maybe so, but at that time, I didn't think it necessary to do that because I knew we were going to win the case in the Supreme Court, considering the evidence."

Drilon was not impressed. "The question of winning and the question of who's responsible for this overpricing are two different things Mr. Solicitor General. The question is why did you keep these documents to yourself."

He asked if it was Benipayo's "judgment call" not to inform the high tribunal. "An overpricing as you said of over half a billion pesos and you did not find it appropriate to bring these documents to the attention of the Supreme Court?"

Benipayo finally explained that while he did not formally submit the documents to the high court, he informed one of the justices about it.

"May I say this: That I officially did not do that. I did not commit anything in writing, but I did bring it to the attention of one of the justices of the Supreme Court," he said.

Propriety

Instead of reassuring the senators, Benipayo's answer raised more questions, especially about the propriety of talking to a Supreme Court justice about a case that was pending.

"Isn't that unusual that a case is pending in the Supreme Court and you bring such an important and crucial document personally to the attention of a member of the court (but) not officially filing to the court?" Drilon said.

Benipayo began to explain that there was "a question of confidentiality" in the case, but Drilon immediately cut him off.

"This is a public interest case," Drilon said. "This involves overpricing. This involves half a billion in public funds."

Incorporators

When Drilon also grilled him about government efforts to recover the P1.3 billion paid to MegaPacific, Benipayo said the administration was "beaten to the draw" by the corporation when it filed a case with a Makati court, demanding that the government pay it an additional P200 million.

Benipayo said MegaPacific was "a mere shell corporation with no real assets in its name, and was incorporated only to feign eligibility for the bidding of the automated contract."

He identified the incorporators as Willy U. Yu, Bonnie S. Yu, Enrique T. Tansipek, Rosita Y. Tansipek, Pedro O. Tan, Johnson W. Fong, Bernard L. Fong and Lauriano A. Barrios.

On Jan. 24, Senate Minority Leader Aquilino Pimentel Jr. scored the government for treating MegaPacific officials and owners with "kid gloves."

Abalos ties

Pimentel said the chances of recovering the money had dimmed after officers and incorporators of MegaPacific "dissolved the company and closed down its office in Metro Manila."

He also pointed out the findings of Ombudsman investigators who discovered that Comelec Chair Benjamin Abalos' allegedly had close ties to MegaPacific's incorporators.

The investigators noted that Abalos and MegaPacific incorporator Pedro Tan had stood as sponsors at the wedding of a son of two other incorporators, the couple Enrique and Rosita Tansipek.

Pimentel said Abalos and other Comelec commissioners also "committed an act of impropriety" when they and their wives traveled to Seoul in 2003 to visit the factory of the voting machine manufacturer.

He said he was informed that the plane tickets and hotel accommodations for the trip were bankrolled by the Korean company.

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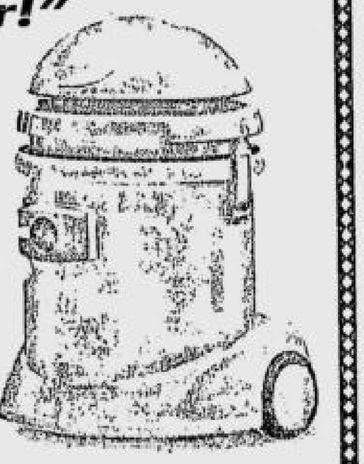

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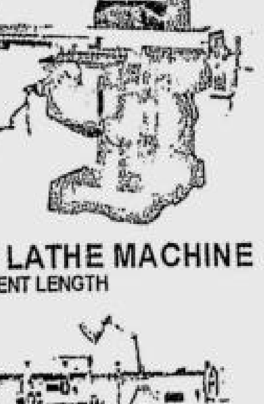

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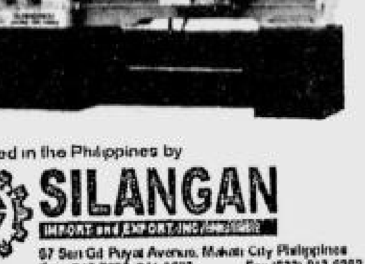

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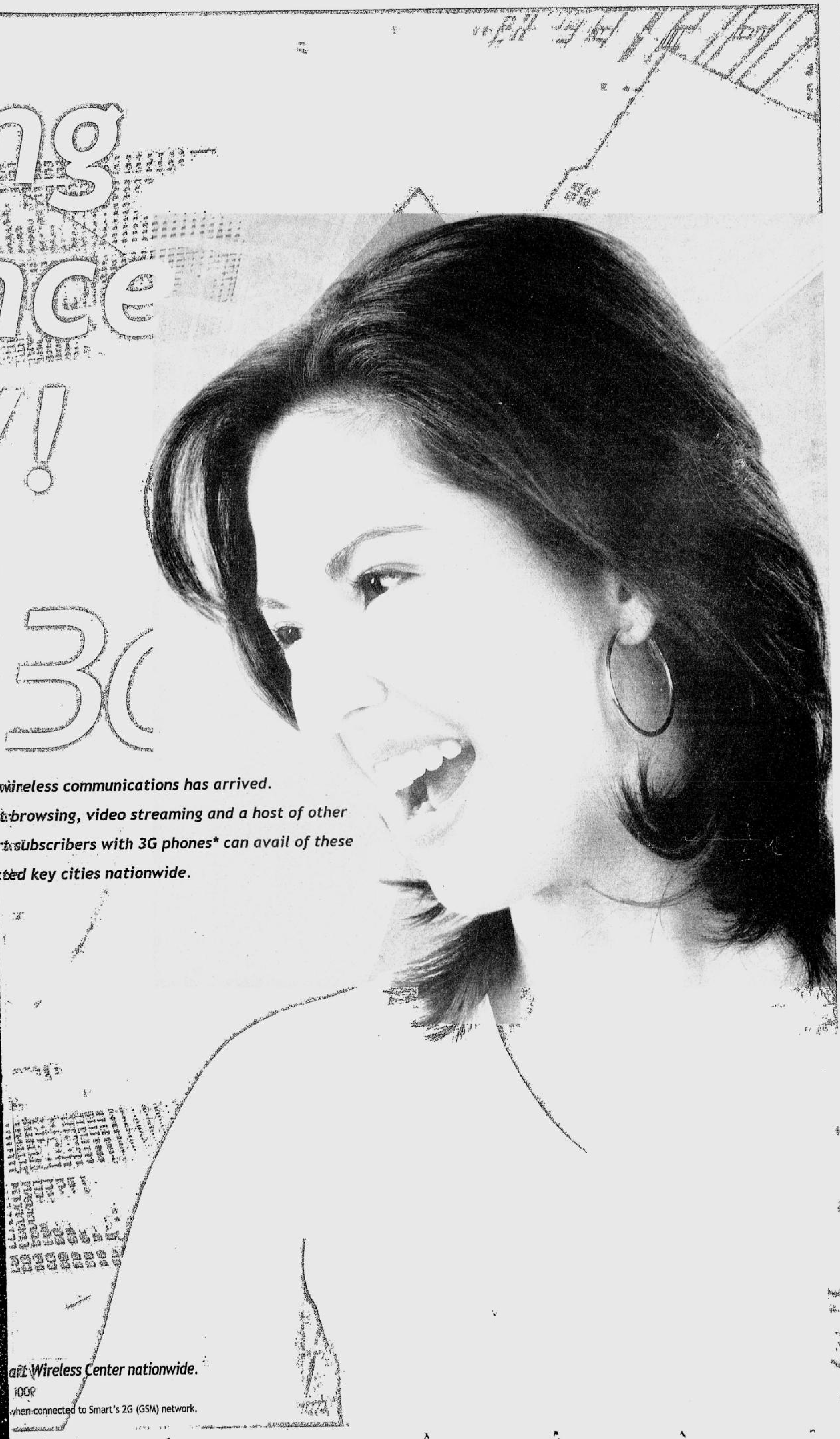

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OPINION

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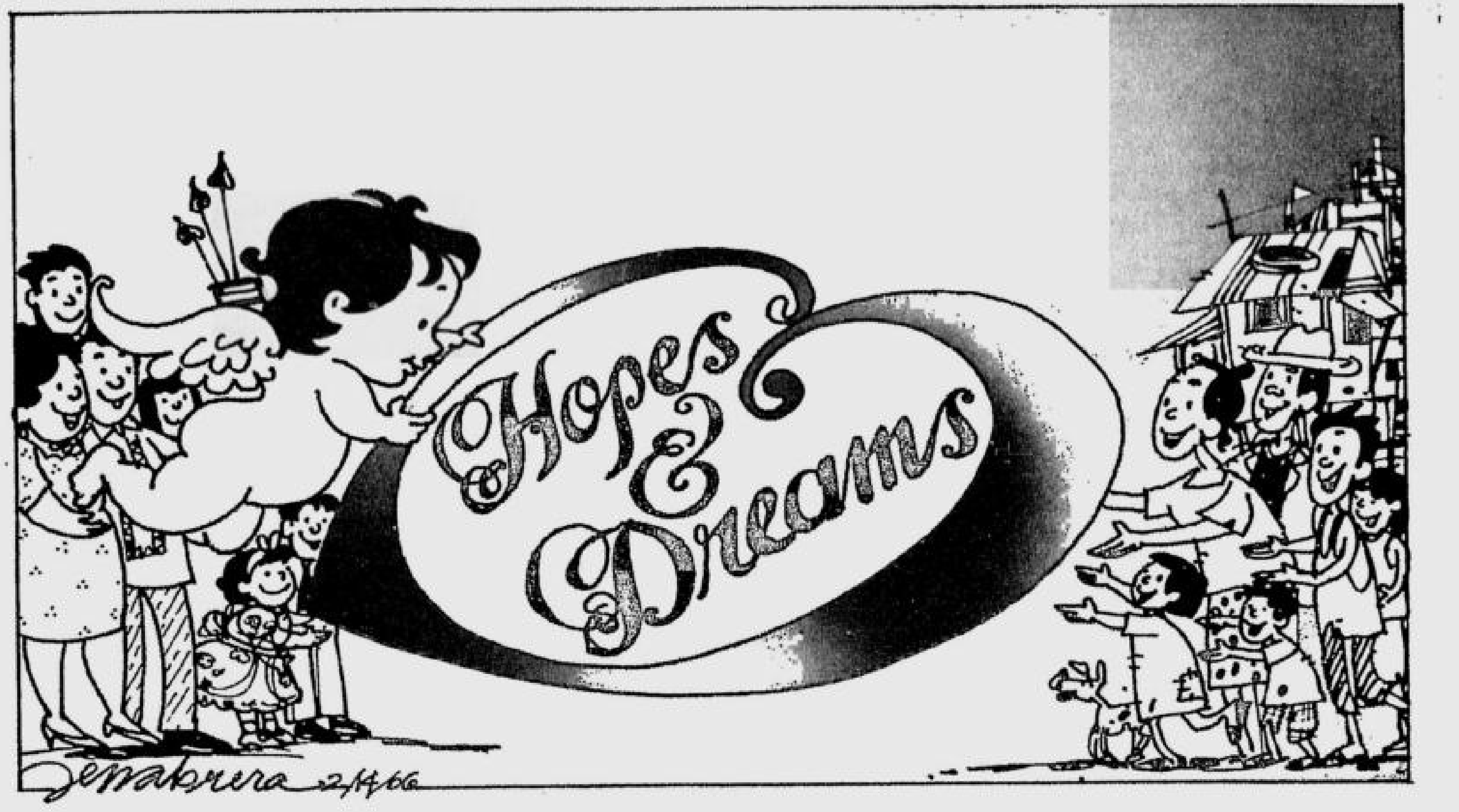


Undemocratic

EDITORIAL

AT FIRST IT WAS REPORTED THAT MALACAÑANG had "blinked" in its confrontation with the Senate over Executive Order 464. Later, Palace officials made it clear that the President had not retreated from enforcing the controversial order that bans government officials from appearing at congressional hearings without her clearance. The order was lifted only with regard to the Senate hearings on the budget, Malacañang officials said.

Malacañang apparently took this step to head off a constitutional crisis. The President's decision may provide temporary relief, but it does not solve the inter-departmental problem. The officials of the executive department are still banned from attending hearings of the Senate and the House of Representatives unless they obtain the President's approval.

Unless EO 464 is permanently revoked, it will remain a continuing source of friction between Malacañang and the Senate. In the course of legislating on various matters and investigating various issues, the Senate will need information from executive officials. But Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye said that EO 464 remains in effect, "especially for legislative inquiries which are deemed unproductive and clearly motivated by self-serving politics."

But who will determine what inquiries are "unproductive" and "motivated by self-serving politics"? The President? In that case, the Senate can never thoroughly conduct inquiries that may even just peripherally touch issues that concern, for instance, the conduct of the 2004 presidential election.

EO 464 violates the time-honored principle of checks and balance in a constitutional democratic government. Each branch of government is supposed to be independent and yet co-equal with the other branches. They can check one another. Without checks and balance, one branch will be dominant and will reign supreme over the others. This was what happened during the Marcos dictatorship: the President's power was unchecked, and he exercised virtually all the powers of government. Do we want to return to this situation?

EO 464 violates the democratic principle of access to information. This is a right exercised by the media and by all citizens. People need to have access to information to be able to intelligently exercise their functions as citizens in a democracy. If ordinary citizens are given access to information, the more reason senators, who are legislating for and on behalf of the citizens, should be given the information they need.

EO 464 was one of the "weapons" created by President Macapagal-Arroyo to shield her from continuing attacks on the legitimacy of her presidency. It has been invoked by executive officials to avoid congressional inquiries into the "Hello Garci" tapes scandal and the P728-million fertilizer fund scam. The opposition has alleged that the "Hello Garci" tapes would prove that Ms Arroyo cheated in the 2004 election and that a substantial part of the P728-million fertilizer fund went to some national and local officials for use in the same election. But it seems that we will never know the truth about these two cases because executive officials have been effectively banned from talking about them by EO 464.

The times call for transparency and public accountability. Government officials, including officials of the executive branch, should tell the people the truth about government activities and programs. They should remember that the President is accountable to the people who (supposedly) elected her, and that as alter egos or extensions of the President they are also accountable to the people. And yet the EO would make it appear that they are accountable only to themselves and to the President.

EO 464 does not promote the cause of access to information, transparency and public accountability. It does not promote the cause of good government. It has to go.

The 'mego syndrome'

VIEWPOINT

Juan L. Mercado

EVER HEARD OF THE "MEGO SYNDROME"?

No? It's a professional hazard that journalists face. Leafing through scientific papers, legal tracts or audit tables often cause "mine-eyes-glaze-over" (mego) disorders.

Transparency is not the strong suit of many public officials, despite the Constitution's provision on the citizen's right to information. So, the press must run the "mego" gauntlet.

"For a good story, follow the smell of money." Amitabha Chowdhury developed that rule in his searing Ananda Bazar Patrika investigative reports of murky contracts in India. That involved "mego-inducing" hours of poring over financial data. It won for him the Magsaysay Award for Journalism.

We could use more of Chowdhury's rule here. President Macapagal Arroyo's Executive Order No. 464 bans executive department officials from testifying at budget hearings. That deepened the murkiness that blankets many agencies.

Dense technical jargon characterize Commission on Audit reports. That infects even its webpage. "Some of my best friends are auditors. But I would not want my daughter to marry one," a grizzled editor said after plowing through COA reports.

Would the agency perform its watchdog role better if auditors were drilled in Reporting 101? It's the ordinary taxpayer that the COA is ultimately responsible to.

Still, the money trail is there, buried under auditing argot. Scan through the two-volume Annual Financial Report on National Government. It tosses up questions for probing.

Item: Amount due national government from government-owned and controlled corporations came to P338.5 billion! (This accumulation of subsidized white elephants constitute the fiscal crisis right there.)

Item: Unliquidated cash advances topped P3.31 billion. "Comelec reported the highest unliquidated cash advances for the year at P1.6 billion" (So, does that flush poll modernization down the tube?)

Item: "Outstanding long-term debt" by the end of 2004 posted "an enormous increase of P384.7 billion... Aggregate debt stock with long-term maturities reached P3,706.3 billion." That's a hefty 11 percent-plus increase over the previous year's level of P3,321.6 billion. (Can anyone tell us how much our grandchildren will pay?)

Or leaf through the Annual Report on Local Governments. It contains data on how provinces, cities and towns raise—and spend—the tax peso. And local governments affect citizens most in their daily lives.

Overall, LGUS in 2004 clamped on austerity measures. Thus, expenses resulted in only a fractional increase (2.2 percent).

But internally, LGUs show little appetite for change from practices flayed earlier, like splurging on personnel services and fracturing the 45-percent cap.

In 2002, the COA reported that salaries chewed up P71.1 billion. This increased to P72.2 billion, says the COA 2004 report.

Don't let the minuscule rise fool you. In reality "(personnel services) expenditures are higher than officially reported," the World Bank and Asian Development Bank. In their study "Decentralization in the Philippines," they point out: "It is common practice to charge payments of temporary employees, e.g., consultants, contractuals and job workers, specially in engineering departments, to maintenance and operations or against development projects."

The three provinces that toted up the highest salary bills were (in millions): Pangasinan, P517.3; Laguna, P450.7; and Quezon, P483.5. The "billionaire" cities were: Manila, P2.12 billion; Makati, P1.58 billion; and Quezon, P1.21 billion. The top three among towns were: San Juan, P180.5 million; Cabuyao, Laguna, P148.9 million; and Imus, Cavite, P138 million.

Was it Ernest Hemingway who once scoffed: "The rich are unlike the poor. The rich have more money?" The COA has a list of 10 "top spenders." Does anyone note the lowest spenders?

The three towns that spent just a fraction more than P12 million a year were: Mahatao, Batanes; Bucloc, Abra, and San Vicente, Northern Samar. In contrast, the three top spending towns were: San Juan, P461 million; Cabuyao, Laguna, P337 million; and Biñan, Laguna, P304 million.

There are "pauper" provinces who had budgets just above P100 million: Camiguin, P132 million; Siquijor, P119 million; and Batanes, P106 million. The "princes" among provinces were: Bulacan, P1.13 billion; Negros Occidental, P1.01 billion; and Laguna, P975 million.

"If you have money, even the spirits will turn the mills for you," the Chinese say. And the COA says these are the top three provinces with the most assets: Cebu, P1.25 billion (it also has P1 billion stashed in the bank); Zamboanga del Norte, P942 million (with P872 also in bank deposits); and Negros Occidental, P899 million.

In this liquidity race, among cities, Manila drops to fourth place. The top three are Quezon, P3.44 billion; Pasig, P2.39 billion; and Makati, P2.01 billion.

Many LGUs bitch about lack of funds. The fact is few use their taxing powers, specially levies on land. It is often the landed families who get elected into office.

Overall, tax on idle land provided about four centavos out of every peso earned from real property taxes. In Cebu City, speculators hold vast stretches of land, in the North Reclamation Area.

"Our job is to tell people the things they don't know," Carol Marin of CBS once said. "Our task is to tell people things they can't ask in a survey."

And this must be done despite the mego syndrome.

(E-mail : juan_mercado@pacific.net.ph)

Hate

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

A STRANGE TOPIC IN A DAY DESIGNATED for love, but hate is the one thing that is spreading like wildfire across the world these days. In particular the Muslim world. Courtesy of Denmark, yes, the same place Marcellus in "Hamlet" had cause to say there's something rotten in. Specifically, courtesy of the Danish newspaper Jyllands-Posten which published 12 cartoons of the Prophet Mohammed, several of them expressly depicting him to be a terrorist. The cartoons were reprinted by various European newspapers, and the result was mayhem.

Literally. In most Muslim countries, the Danish Embassies have been besieged by angry marchers. In Damascus and Beirut, the embassies were burned down. Thankfully, no Danish official has yet been reported to have been killed, but that may owe more to the precautions the officials took (many flew right back home) than to the restraint the people they've colossally pissed off have exercised.

The fires have spread over to this country. Late last week, angry Moros took to the streets in Quiapo to protest the oppression. One old man with a flowing white beard and a prayer cap was livid with anger. He was beside himself in his vituperations. "We are not afraid of you, we are not afraid of you!" he kept shouting.

Not even the US invasion of Iraq has wrenched out such cries of torment and wrath from the Muslim counties. Not even the US occupation of Iraq has brought the fractious Arab tribes together in hatred of a common enemy. The political consequences are staggering. The protest has already gone past Denmark to the United States, some Arab protesters saying it's the US's role as chief infidel that's encouraging anti-Muslim attacks of this sort. It's enough to make you believe the Danish cartoonists who wreaked havoc upon the world are closet Muslims, or the al Qaida's deep-cover fifth column.

Jyllands-Posten has already apologized for offending Muslim sensibilities but refused to go beyond that. It defends its right to publish them as part of freedom of the press. Says its cultural editor, Flemming Rose: "These (cartoons) were not directed against Muslims but against people in cultural life in Europe who are submitting themselves to self-censorship when dealing with Islam."

Is this sufficient justification? I think not. I've seen the cartoons and read many of the commentaries on them, many of them thoughtful ones by journalists themselves, and I join those who say this is not an issue of freedom of the press at all, it is one of basic decency and respect. Bill Clinton has called the cartoons appalling and compared it to anti-Semitism. I agree: Even if the cartoons were not addressed to Muslims in general but to Muslims in Europe who submit to religious intolerance, they go well past the bounds of decency. They do not depict those fanatical followers as terrorists, they depict the source of their faith as being so. Those are two different things. Islam in particular revering the Prophet Mohammed (I am not a Muslim but I do not mind saying "Peace be on him," as is the Muslim custom when mentioning his name) in the intense life-and-death way that it does, it is asking for trouble to portray him in this light.

It is tempting to draw as parallel Al Jazeera cartoonists depicting Jesus Christ as a modern-day Inquisitor bidding George W. Bush torture the living hell out of his (Jesus') enemies. Al Jazeera may argue that that has some basis in fact, given Bush's and the American Right's predilection to invoke God to promote their murderous activities. But offensive as that is bound to be to Christians, and bitter as their reaction to the outrage would be, even that doesn't capture the gravity of the provocation.

That is so because blasphemy no longer carries as much weight to Christians today as it did during the Inquisition, when to blaspheme was to invite oneself to a roasting in the square. To appreciate the gravity of the provocation, one has to find a comparable core belief or value in Western society, one attended by the same passionate, intense, life-and-death commitments. High up on the list is racial equality. The real equivalent of what Jyllands-Posten did is for an American newspaper to publish cartoons showing Martin Luther King to be exhorting American blacks, or African-Americans (which is the politically correct way to call them now), to loot white folks' homes, murder their occupants and rape their women. And pass it off as satire. After Hurricane Katrina, particularly, I doubt the publishers and editors of that paper will live very long to argue press freedom.

One might argue that the parallel doesn't hold because an American newspaper naturally counts African-Americans among their readers whereas a Danish newspaper does not count Indonesians or Afghans among its own. But if the current furor or fury has anything to teach us, it is also how small the world has become, how truly balled up the globe has become. I myself saw the cartoons and read the commentaries in one of the most powerful media we now have, which is the Internet. That alone must make us a little more careful about what we say, taking stock of cultural and religious differences, the media more than anybody else. None of this is to say that the media should bow down to public pressure, local or global, all of it is to say they may not raise the immediate cultures surrounding them as the prism by which all values and attitudes, all beliefs and tenets, are to be viewed. It demands of us that we look at the world in a more catholic way (what monumental irony that Catholic should often parade itself as narrow-mindedness!) and respect sensibilities.

It's not easy. But look at the fires engulfing the world today and ask yourself if that is an acceptable alternative.

Barangay officials should also be charged

POLITICAL TIDBITS

Belinda Olivares-Cunanan

THE SENATORS' RECENT MOVE TO SEEK A temporary restraining order against EO 464 was actually unnecessary. Even before this move, the Supreme Court had already scheduled for Feb. 21 the hearing on their earlier petition to have the EO declared unconstitutional. Apparently, the senators just wanted to highlight the Palace's intransigence in refusing to revoke the EO, even after it allowed the Cabinet members to attend budget hearings.

The EO was a direct result of the confrontation between the Palace and the Senate, and here both sides clearly must share the blame. The Senate has stepped up its attacks on the Executive especially after the unsuccessful demand made by Senate President Franklin Drilon on July 8, 2005 for President Macapagal-Arroyo to resign and the more recent move led by the House of Representatives to shift to a parliamentary/unicameral system that would abolish the Senate. Throw in, too, the fact that a good number of senators are running for reelection next year and you have three good reasons for the increased viciousness of the Senate hearings.

* * *

In addition to the string of investigations of alleged administration anomalies, budget hearings have become particularly acrimonious. To be sure, previous administrations had their own tussles with Congress and a few executive offices have ended up with P1-a-year budgets. But these investigations have never been as nasty as those conducted in recent weeks. One House member has been heard to complain that the Senate budget hearings have become mini-impeachment trials.

On the other hand, the administration has been saddled with allegations of corruption in various departments. The perception is that the EO is meant to avoid full transparency and accountability of its officials. GMA has to handle the corruption issue well as it's the one issue that could erode support even among her allies.

* * *

Former President Cory Aquino has been making the rounds of schools and church groups demanding the resignation of the President and Vice President Noli de Castro. She is pushing for her *inaanak*, Drilon, to be installed as president.

Aquino's case against GMA has been known since July 8, but it's hard to understand her beef against De Castro. The electoral protest filed by Loren Legarda against De Castro is now being addressed by the Presidential Electoral Tribunal, which has opened more than 25 percent of the ballot boxes from Cebu. But so far, according to De Castro's lawyer, Romulo Makalintal, no significant anomalies have been unearthed that could overturn the one-million vote margin of De Castro as well as GMA. But Aquino cannot wait. De Castro also has to go so that Drilon will get the presidency. Her Edsa supporters are asking one another: What happened to Cory?

* * *

While our politicians have been quarreling, drug manufacturers and pushers have been having a field day. The nation was shocked when a drug "flea market" was discovered not far from the Pasig City Hall. There people sold drugs and users could buy any quantity and smoke it right there. The police have arrested over 300 people.

We were in Dagupan City to join Speaker Jose de Venecia and his wife Gina last Sunday for an advance birthday celebration of sorts for Gina with JDV's supporters in his district. As lunch was about to end, PNP Director General Arturo Lomibao, who was in the area, arrived and naturally we talked about the drug flea market bust. He told us that the PNP got wind of the flea market from some drug users who had turned informers. He also said that apparently some police officers were involved in the trade. The consensus among the guests was that the barangay officials ought to be charged, too, since the market wouldn't have flourished without their knowledge. I agree.

Our barangay officials, who are paid by the taxpayers, are not being utilized for promoting security and fighting vices. They only become useful to politicians at election time. They should be harnessed to work for the welfare of the people who pay their salaries.

* * *

I was glad to be back in San Jose, Antique, after 20 years. I was last there for the funeral of its hero and martyr for democracy, Evelio Javier, in February 1986. Last Friday, we traveled with Gov. Sally Perez from Iloilo to San Jose, and I happily noted that except for some very short portions, the mountain roads are in good condition. They are a sharp contrast to the bumpy rough roads I took in 1984 with Sally, then Cagayan de Oro Mayor Nene Pimentel and former Sen. Eva Kalaw, who went there to boost Evelio's candidacy for the Batasan Pambansa (I was there to cover it for Mr. & Ms. Magazine). San Jose has progressed tremendously in the last 20 years and there are beautiful houses, nice restaurants and cafés, and shopping malls. Apparently, Antique has already left the "Club 20" poorest provinces.

But alas, the politics there is still division instead of addition. During the commemoration ceremonies for Evelio at the town plaza, organized by the governor, Manila Mayor and LP chair Lito Atienza, one of Evelio's closest allies against Marcos, was in the midst of his speech extolling Evelio's heroism, when along came a long caravan of supporters of Rep. Exequiel Javier, playing Evelio's theme song, "Impossible Dream" so loud we couldn't hear Atienza at some points in his speech. That certainly marred the beautiful three-day celebration that included the opening of the museum of Evelio by NCCA Executive Director Cecile Alvarez.

I have said this many times and it's worth repeating to my two good friends, Sally Perez and Ex Javier, among the people closest to Evelio during his lifetime: You have to be friends and join hands for the sake of Antique. It's big enough for both of you.

Dissonant voices

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David

THE FIRST PROTESTS AGAINST THE PUBLICATION of cartoons considered offensive by Muslims have been staged here, months after the controversy was ignited in Europe.

Initially confined to angry statements and resolutions and to a boycott of Danish products in Arab countries (the cartoons were originally published in a private Danish newspaper), the protests have since escalated into loud and angry demonstrations, including an armed attack on the offices of the European Union in the West Bank. As Amando Doronila has noted, the Philippines is being drawn into the controversy, with protesters burning the Danish flag outside a mosque perhaps as a sign of solidarity with other Muslim communities around the world. With some luck, though, the Filipino Muslim community could avoid seeing the protests escalate into violence, as it has elsewhere, if only they would heed more sober and reasonable voices from their own ranks.

Gathered earlier this month for a three-day conference on "peace, development and democracy," Filipino *ulamas* or religious leaders have issued a statement condemning the cartoons and demanding an apology from the Danish government but cautioning people from taking the violent path. Organized by the Philippine Council for Islam and Democracy (PCID) and sponsored by the Royal Netherlands Embassy in the Philippines, the "Ulama Forum for Peace and Democracy" had 35 participants, mostly from Mindanao. Present in the forum were senior *muftis* (*ulama* recognized as leaders by their peers) from Sulu, Basilan, Tawi-Tawi, Maguindanao, Lanao del Sur, Marawi, Zamboanga, Davao and Cotabato. Other participants included six Islamic institutes, and members of civil society.

* * *

HERE'S the full text of the "Darul Ifta" of the Philippines on the offensive cartoons:

"We join our voices of condemnation with our Muslim brothers and sisters in every corner of the globe who have strongly protested the insulting publication of cartoons depicting Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). We are one with them in saying that 'this vicious, outrageous and provocative campaign cannot be justified in the name of freedom of expression of the press.' Indeed, it is an undisputed law of human relations that the exercise of one's freedom ends where the rights of others begin. Freedom of the press cannot trample upon the higher freedom of religion.

"Our world has become more divided since 9/11 and the invasion of Iraq. Militarization is wrong since it only divides us more. We are saddened that the Danish and European media have added fuel to the fire by printing a cartoon that has provoked anger in the hearts of Muslims who are already pressed to the wall.

"Apologies are required. However, we caution the Ummah (the Muslim Community) in the Philippines against the use of violence as a way of protesting this insult to our faith. The teaching of Shariah condemns all forms of unjust and unreasonable use of violence, for Islam is the religion of peace and the Prophet (peace be upon him) condemns all such forms of violence especially those done in his name.

"The Assembly of the Darul Ifta of the Philippines joins hands with the Muslim Ummah in condemning the desecration of the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him) and calls for a sincere and truthful apology."

* * *

AS DORONILA pointed out, the conflict has been characterized as one of respect for religion against freedom of expression. Newspapers in other European countries, challenging the idea that countries or even religions, can dictate to private media about what it can or cannot publish or air, have gone to the extent of reprinting the cartoons in defiance of the protesters.

The ulamas' statement asserts the primacy of religious freedom—and the related value of respect for religious sensibilities—over that of freedom of expression and of the press. In a secular democracy, though, press freedom is not only protected, it is defended in the law.

Is it merely a clash of cultures? The cartoonist might argue that he was addressing a mainly secular audience who might not presumably be offended by a cartoon poking fun at a religious figure. But Muslims feel the cartoons were drawn out of wholesale disdain for their religion, and therefore offensive even if they were not counted among the publication's main audience.

* * *

IRONICALLY, the statement was drafted and signed even as the ulamas were taking part in a series of conferences designed, in the word of PCID convenor Amina Rasul, "to advance the complimentary nature of Islam and democracy, especially at the level of the religious leaders and through them, the grassroots." In the contest of Islam, Rasul said, religious leaders play a vital role not only in the spiritual aspect but also in "secular guidance."

The Ulama interacted with experts on topics that ranged from extracting democratic principles from Islamic textual sources such as the Koran, the compatibility of Islam and democracy, as well as the need for advancing human rights, especially the rights of women. AIM professor and former Agrarian Reform Secretary Ernesto Garilao assisted the Ulama in crafting action plans for the promotion of peace and development within the context of Islam and democracy.

So perhaps the cartoon protests might be a way of testing the assertions of the compatibility of Islam with democracy, especially of the leadership's tolerance for contrary views, even if these views should be deemed offensive or insulting. While there are laws that protect individuals and communities from character assassination and social defamation, a society's democratic nature is also tested by its acceptance and tolerance of other, dissonant voices.

Valentine's and all that

SENSE AND SENSIBILITY

Bambi L. Harper

YOU'VE OFTEN HEARD IT SAID THAT THERE'S chemistry between two people. Turns out there's a real basis for that saying, according to anthropologist Helen Fisher. When you look at your beloved "the ventral tegmental area and the caudate nucleus (the parts of the brain linked to reward and pleasure) light up... Love lights up the caudate nucleus because it is home to a dense spread of receptors for a neurotransmitter called dopamine ... which creates intense energy, exhilaration, focused attention ... (Thus) love makes you bold, makes you bright, makes you run real risks, which you sometimes survive, and sometimes you don't..."

Aside from scientists, who understands ventral tegmental and caudate nucleus? C'mon you guys, they sound like mathematical equations for making incendiary bombs. When you fall in love, you dream that your relationship will last and lead to lasting happiness. The airwaves are full of songs about love. Most movies and plays, even those about phantoms and the Pearl Harbor invasion, are about this type of love.

Now it turns out that the feelings that you would normally describe as being in love have everything to do with dopamine and serotonin, two little substances that anyone who has taken a mood-altering drug at some point in their lives has heard about. If on the other hand, you're one of these people who're obsessively compulsive, your favorite psychiatrist would have by now prescribed Prozac to correct your serotonin imbalance. People with OCD do weird things like falling in love with rats (the four-footed ones) or fear pearl earrings or, do what Catholic naturalist taxidermist Charles Waterton did. He is said to have turned "animal corpses into effigies of famed Protestants, and after his wife died, he never slept in bed again, preferring the floor. Occasionally he would hide behind couches and attack guests like a dog, chewing at their ankles." You get the general idea.

Experiments have proven that levels of serotonin in both the obsessives' blood and the lovers' blood are 40 percent lower than those in normal subjects, leading scientists to conclude that love and mental illness may be difficult to tell apart. But you knew this, having watched your best friend's behavior at its most illogical. People in love obsess over their loved ones and wear an idiot's smile on their faces whenever the person's name is mentioned, which leads to that other saying that when the love affair is over, he/she has finally come to his/her senses!

The majority of human beings have experienced the "symptoms" of romantic love: the desire to be with one person to the exclusion of others, intruding thoughts of the beloved, exaggeration of the lover's good traits and tolerance (if not outright denial) of his bad ones, constant seeking of affirmation, dependence and empathy toward the other. Even schedules are rearranged to accommodate the other's wishes. In the event it's not reciprocal, there is always hope in adversity. Obstacles even heighten the feeling; mood swings, from ecstasy to despair, are violent and extreme. Most people who recover claim it's as if they had suffered an illness (mostly mental!). People in love are usually boring as they lose interest in external events and activities and are focused on this one person.

Naturally there is a down side to all this. What if the other party doesn't share your obsession or is interested in someone else or has lost interest in you? This is where lurid headlines about adultery, spousal battering, murder and suicide come into the picture. Jealousy is closely linked to love as well as divorce (once it's over for one party at least), and depression caused by rejection.

It must be a relief to realize that feelings of being in love or being rejected usually do not last long. Anyone who has survived the condition knows it. A friend with vast experience in this realm contends that three months is tops for romantic love—afterwards the furor dies down, thank heaven.

This too has a logical and chemical explanation, described as the phenomenon of tolerance: brains adjust to the excessive input of dopamine just like any drug users. Your tolerance levels rises and you need more. Again physiologists explain that in the romantic state, the brain is full of dopamine but this transforms into a state of "oxytocin-induced attachment," oxytocin being a hormone that promotes a feeling of connection and bonding.

For some reason, all these explanations put a damper on moonlight and roses. Can you imagine a full moon and violins in the background and then realizing it has everything to do with serotonin? Or if there's no wild urges, it's simply due to the oxytocin? It's enough to induce a manic-depressive state.

Most people will attest that there is a tendency for romantic love to turn into fondness and attachment or worse, repugnance, the what-in-the-world-did-I-see-in-him syndrome. This is when the things the beloved does which used to be cute are just plain irritating, like eating dirty socks for breakfast, for instance.

At this point, it should be interesting to ask whether a pill could trigger appropriate reactions and change one's mental state toward another person. It shouldn't be that far-fetched if emotions are based on chemical substances. Actually there have been enough movies and stories written about magic potions that induce these feelings. So whatever happened to romantic love?

* * *

Comments at bambiharper@yahoo.com

Working titles

YOUNG BLOOD

Cecile Adrias

We want to know what the young are thinking about. What are their thoughts on current issues? We welcome contributions from the twentysomething and below.—Ed.

THE MOMENT IT HAPPENED, I KNEW I HAD TO WRITE about it. The title of my piece would be "Dismissed."

Last Christmas, my boyfriend said we needed a cooling off period. Two weeks later, he said goodbye to two years' worth of food and constant togetherness. It was over in 30 minutes. Just like that. I felt like I had been dismissed! Dissed!

To think I chose him instead of entering the convent! To think I gave him a second chance! To think I stuck it out with him even if people from Muelle Loney to Punta Buri were calling me a martyr!

Erase! Erase! Three days after the big dismissal, I changed my mind. The title I wanted for my article had to be more profound, something that would make my public licking of wounds really worth it. I was going to title my piece, "The Confessions of a Chewing Gum."

Now that's profound. This guy, he chewed me out. He was the best chewer of all. And he had worked out a fail-safe method for spitting gum, too.

I wanted to write about the luck of a chewing gum. I wanted to end the piece with the chewing gum getting its revenge (it can be very hard to pry off shoes, clothes, and hair, you know). I wanted to write about the relationship, which was draining, to say the least. In the weeks before my dismissal, I was like the cheerleader who had forgotten to take Red Bull before the championship game. I had this epiphany when I re-read my diary. I was so amazed at myself. What an actress! Super!

My mom had been saying I was "coating my misery in bland delight" (whatever that meant). I knew there were holes in our relationship somewhere, but I chose to leave them unplugged and told myself: "Well, there's always a next time. It won't happen again. He's just tired and he has 65 million things on his beautiful mind." I was truly the tastiest, juiciest chewing gum there was.

I was all set to write everything when I learned about the girl, who happens to be one of my not-so-close-but-still-close friends. I had told Mr. Chewer, during one of our many conversations long ago, she was the girl I wanted him to be with if I suddenly died. He took my advice while I'm still alive!

I laughed out really hard when I learned about l'affaire. So it never was about me, after all. It was about him. We drifted apart? We had nothing in common? I wouldn't stand by him? He couldn't make time for me because of family concerns? Hellooo!

By then, I knew that everything he had told me during the 30-minute dismissal was cow dung. I had been had not once, but twice. Tsk, tsk, my piece needed a major rewrite. Possible titles now: "Men Never Change," "Sophomore Jinx," "Breakup Lines: Discovering the Subliminal," or "Love is Never Lovelier the Second Time Around" (too long).

I thought I was too angry to ever be able to sit down and pound on my computer to write this. My rage lasted about a day, and I lost one pound (yehey!). After that one very angry day, I told myself, "Enough!" I turned to all the cliches I knew for consolation: He is no longer in my life. He is not worth my tears. He is not the one for me. It is for the best. God has other plans for me. The children in Botswana have bigger problems than my one tiny dilemma.

Needless to say, l'affaire and le dismissal sent tongues in our small town wagging. I told—no, ordered—my friends to put up a united front. No press conference from me, just a two-word press release saying, "No comment." I expected all my friends to say the same thing when asked about what happened to us, the perfect couple gone bust. "No Comment" would have been a good title had I written this last week.

I turned to my faith, too. "Lord, I know Your love for me never fades," I would pray. So maybe I thought I'd do something along the lines of "Out of a Heartbreak, Into the Convent... Again?"

Nah, I don't think so. For now, I am blissfully going to early morning Mass and the adoration chapel.

Somebody tried to soothe the hurt by advising me: "Don't think. Don't analyze. Just be. The pain comes from the interpretation." So enough. Stop. No more thinking about the what if's because the what if's don't exist.

This year is not the year of the dog, it is the year of magnanimity. In my earlier drafts, I wanted to tell Mr. Chewer, "I hope you care about your current chewee as much as you care about yourself." But that's mean. So instead, I would like to say to him: "Go! You have my blessings, remember? I sincerely wish you both happiness. Sincerely. The threat of nuclear devastation is nil. Promise."

I'm finally writing this piece today. Today, just today, I am determined to be happy instead of immersing myself in my self-made dramas. Just today, too, I know I have finally found the courage to write finis to that past experiment in love and loving.

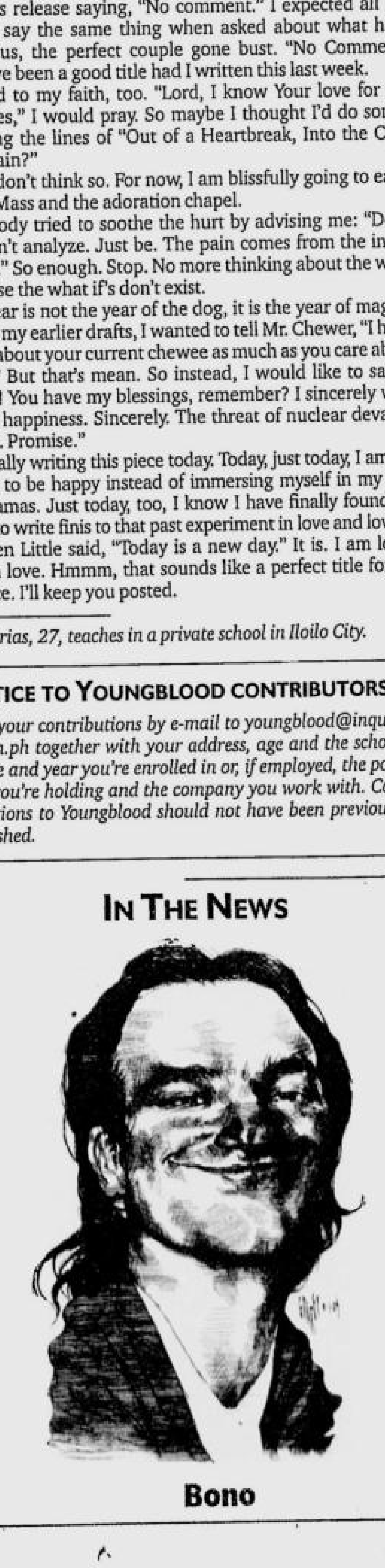
Chicken Little said, "Today is a new day." It is. I am loved and I am love. Hmmm, that sounds like a perfect title for my next piece. I'll keep you posted.

Cecile Adrias, 27, teaches in a private school in Iloilo City.

NOTICE TO YOUNGBLOOD CONTRIBUTORS:

Send your contributions by e-mail to youngblood@inquirer.com.ph together with your address, age and the school, course and year you're enrolled in or, if employed, the position you're holding and the company you work with. Contributions to Youngblood should not have been previously published.

IN THE NEWS



Bono

Incompetent and cynical

FORMER SUPREME COURT ASSOCIATE Justice Isagani A. Cruz dismissed, in his Feb. 4 column, the Consultative Commission as "a presumptuous superfluity without credentials or power to advise the rightful authorities on the serious subject of constitutional reform."

Because of his extreme bias against President Macapagal-Arroyo and the Concom members, Cruz ignored the very subject he pooh-poohed: "I have not bothered to read the proposed revision of the present Constitution as prepared by the Consultative Commission because its provenance is suspicious, its very existence is doubtful, and its operations are uselessly expensive."

Cruz contrasts the "distinguished" members of the 1986 ConCom with the "shabby" qualifications of most of the 2005 Concom members whom he saw as "practically anonymous and hardly reliable students" of constitutional reform. In fact, the 55 Concom members, coming from different parts of the Philippines, are highly competent and also closely in touch with the people. The real test of the Concom members' qualifications should be the quality of their ideas and proposals, which Cruz refused to look into. The retired justice prefers to pre-judge.

For Cruz's information, the Concom members made a serious assessment of the shortcomings of our present Constitution: (1) its outmoded and dysfunctional presidential form of government, (2) its highly centralized and ineffective unitary structure, and (3) its unduly restrictive economic policies that discourage foreign business from providing our country with badly needed capital and technology so that we can create many more jobs, increase personal incomes, and raise revenues for government services.

Everywhere the Concom held its regional consultations around the country, representatives of various sectors, as well as local political leaders, were present. Records will show that they supported the main proposals of Concom. But without any basis in fact, how can Cruz say that Concom was extravagant and wasteful in doing its work? In fact, Concom accomplished its important and difficult mission in the shortest time possible by working very hard. It should be emphasized that Concom's public hearings were the first time in our history that people were seriously consulted on their concerns about and reactions to the proposed reforms. With the benefit of public consultations, the Concom proposals serve as useful reference for our very busy legislators when they themselves finally work on amending the Constitution.

A quote from John Locke best describes Cruz's refusal to educate himself on the Concom's proposals: "New opinions are usually suspected and always opposed without any other reason but because they are new and not already common."

It is not the Concom that is incompetent and "cynical."

—LITO MONICO LORENZANA,
secretary general, Concom

The government's irrational rationalization

STREAMLINING THE GOVERNMENT bureaucracy is no joke as it would put those who would be retrenched in a complex economic situation. They'd lose not only their source of livelihood but also their dream of receiving pension upon their retirement.

If only President Macapagal-Arroyo spends more time with poor Filipino families—she should not just pay them very brief visits—she'd get to feel their fears and hopes, their vulnerabilities and strengths, their needs and potentials. She'd find out how rudely some government functionaries treat the poor. She'd understand the complexity of the financial hardships they're going through in these bad times. And she'd see where most of the people who would be thrown out of their jobs because of the heartless "irrational rationalization" (of government bureaucracy) would end up.

In the eyes of the working poor in the bureaucracy, as well as of the members of their families and close friends, the more President Arroyo insists on pushing through with the controversially irrational Rationalization Program, the more she appears to people here and abroad as a leader who has no heart for the poor.

At this point in time, the Arroyo administration faces almost all sorts of threats and dangers—a predicament that previous administrations never experienced. The situation calls for sobriety, and law-abiding taxpayers should be well advised not to get involved in destabilization moves, especially those started in Metro Manila's crowded areas.

There will be no end to the calls for President Arroyo's ouster. Already, the impeachment case against her is being revived. There is also reportedly a coup plot in the works—and this is being spearheaded by discontented junior military officers with support from the Magdalo mutineers and the communist rebels. The opposition continues to criticize the President, never mind if the criticisms are unfounded. And many see the irrational Rationalization Program as a social time bomb. Crime is all over, and most rampant in urban areas. Also, poverty continues to worsen. The figures on contractual employment keep increasing even as the rate of permanent employment is thinning out. The prices of commodities are skyrocketing beyond the reach of many hungry citizens. And, of course, we continue to hear of power being abused by the highest public officials, not a few of whom are with the military and police.

—ROMY V. LOFAMIA,
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Novaliches, Quezon City

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Senate not running away from Cha-cha debate

THIS REFERS TO THE BELINDA OLIVARES-Cunanan's column titled "To senators: Be not afraid to debate." (PDI, 1/24/06) It is clearly not true that the senators are afraid to go into a debate on the proposed Charter change and shift to the parliamentary system. Every day we see them on TV or read about them in the papers discussing the merits or demerits of the proposed constitutional amendments and revision. The senators see a necessary balance of national and local interests, as well as stronger civil liberties, in a bicameral system; while congressmen see a more responsive government in a unicameral system.

But what is now more important to determine is how the public views the personalities and institutions involved in the debate. According to a recent survey by the Social Weather Stations (Nov. 27-Dec. 4, 2005), Senate President Franklin Drilon, who has openly opposed Charter change, has a net satisfaction rating of +24 percent compared to 0 percent for Speaker Jose de Venecia, the prime mover of Charter change. On the other hand, the Senate, which as a whole is against Charter change, has also a higher net approval rating of +14 percent, while the House of Representatives, the majority of which wants Charter change, has a net rating of only +7 percent.

Thus, public opinion clearly supports the Senate position on constitutional change. Its high approval rating also proves the public's appreciation of its performance as a bulwark of individual liberties and civil rights. The House majority has abandoned its duty to defend the public interest on behalf of partisan and local interests, while the Senate continues to uphold and vigorously defend the national good.

—JOSE R. GARCIA, bureau director,
Public Relations and Information Bureau,
Senate of the Philippines

Hero's welcome not political act

I BEG TO DISAGREE WITH THE negative comments on the hero's welcome accorded by President Macapagal-Arroyo, Manila Mayor Lito Atienza and other prominent personalities to Manny Pacquiao after the latter beat Erik Morales in Las Vegas last Jan. 22.

The hero's welcome was not just for Pacquiao. The TV coverage of the affair shows that the gold medalists in the SEA Games, and the honest student and policeman who returned to the rightful owners the money they found, were likewise honored and given due recognition by the President. It was a moral obligation and the civic duty of President Arroyo and Mayor Atienza as chief executives to give them special recognition for their hard-earned victories and their honesty, which brought honor and pride to our country. It was therefore clear that GMA was not riding on Pacquiao's popularity to win "pogi points."

Pacquiao stressed that he fought Morales, who beat him in their previous meeting, for pride and glory, not only for himself but also for his country and people.

—DODONG L. FLORES,
Countryside Homes Subd.,
Leon Llido Street, Lagao,
General Santos City

An interesting revolution

"EDUCATION IS A PUBLIC VALUE." HOW true. I read with much interest the commentary of Ms Marie Lim-Ayuyao on the challenges of improving public education and the role the community must play to make it happen. (PDI, 02/06/06)

It would be interesting to see how new technologies, such as the Internet, can be used to bridge the challenge of establishing a more engaging model of partnership between private/community stakeholders and the school community they serve.

I believe that community-based initiatives to improve the public school system should be monitored and assessed regularly to ensure that the resources poured into such initiatives effectively serve their purpose. As is the rule in business, resources spent must yield meaningful and positive results to make a sustainable enterprise. I believe a similar discipline and approach need to be followed in investments that seek to develop a higher quality of human resources, which in effect could uplift the value of the communities supporting them.

I would like to know more about the Education Revolution 2006 and, perhaps, discuss some technology enablers that may help in establishing a strong link between school beneficiaries and education stakeholders.

—RICKY PEÑA,
ricky@meridiantelekoms.com

Coco levy compromise not good for good governance, accountability

WE, SMALL COCONUT FARMERS IN Negros Oriental, are calling for the resignation of lawyer Camilo Sabio as chair of the Presidential Commission on Good Government. We also oppose the compromise agreement (on the coco levy fund) being peddled by some coconut farmers group.

Sabio's openness to an out-of-court settlement is contrary to our collective and fundamental interest in seeing through that justice is meted out to the millions of small coconut farmers who have been deprived of their right to benefit from the coco levy that was forcibly imposed on them more than 18 years ago.

Many of our colleagues have died without seeing the just resolution of the coco levy cases, but this is not enough, justifiable reason to yield to an out-of-court settlement. We believe we will get our just deserts not only when we shall have fully recovered the coco levy funds and assets, but also when those who perpetrated this wrongdoing on us shall have been convicted and punished.

Sabio and the pro-compromise coconut farmers misread our collective sentiments. The compromise will not put closure to the social sins committed by Eduardo Cojuangco Jr. and his cohorts. And it would be a debilitating blow to our nation's struggle for good governance and public accountability!

—CLARITA D. MAYPA,
BOD chair,
Negros Oriental Coconut Farmers MPC,
c/o liga_agrikultura@yahoo.com

Some thoughts about women in gov't, etc.

WHY NOT ELECT OR APPOINT MORE women to government service so as to minimize, if not completely eliminate, graft and corruption in government?

Why not convert Metro Manila into a "super-province" with its leader, the governor, to be elected by the people. I think this will solve the problems and misunderstandings that come between the chair of the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority and some mayors of the metropolis. And it will certainly redound to the benefit of the people of Metro Manila?

Why not increase bank interests on savings accounts, and at the same time, reduce the withholding tax on such accounts from 20 percent to 10 percent? This way, our people will be encouraged to deposit their extra money in banks.

—PAUL R. MORTEL,
MBLA Court, Malanday,
Marikina City

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

TV GUIDE

Tuesday, February 14, 2006

Find out who will be the next...
ON YOUR IDOL NETWORK
ABC Iba Tayo!
American Idol
Wednesday & Thursday 10PM

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Channel	2:30PM	3:00PM	3:30PM	4:00PM	4:30PM	5:00PM	5:30PM	6:00PM	6:30PM	7:00PM	7:30PM	8:00PM	8:30PM	9:00PM	9:30PM	10:00PM	10:30PM	[illegible]	11:30PM
ABC 5			WNCAA (Rerun)		World Pool League				Sentro	Mumbai Thrillers	ABC Action Movies				Big News	ALI		Billboard On Air	
ABS-CBN 2	Kapamilya Cinema				Little Amy	Mr Bean	Naruto	Amazing Twins	Meteor Garden Season 2	TV Patrol World	Gulong Ng Palad	Mga Anghel Na Walang Langit	Pinoy Big Brother	Vietnam Rose	Forbidden Love	Bora			Insider
AXN		Las Vegas		Las Vegas		Max Exposure (Season II)		Lost		24		When Animals Attack		Alias		David Blaine Vertigo		David Blaine Frozen In Time	
Cartoon Network	Johnny Bravo	Dexter's Laboratory/ The Powerpuff Girls/'s Valentine's Day, Johnny Bravo	Ed, Edd N Eddy's Valentine's Special	A Scooby-Doo Valentine	Foster's Home For Imaginary Friends	Codename Kids Next Door	The Grim Adventures Of Billy & Mandy	Power Rangers Wild Force	The Gransazers	Battle B-Daman	Energy Bomb	X-Men Evolution	Samurai Jack	Justice League	Static Shock	Power Rangers Wild Force	The Gransazers		
Cinema One		Bilangin Ang Bituin Sa Langit				Till There Was You				Ngayong Nandito Ka				Dahil May Isang Ikaw				Milan	
Cinemax	Breaking The Silence (2:45 PM)			Contagious (4:15 PM)			Trapped (5:45 PM)					Lara Croft Tomb Raider The Cradle Of Life				Feeling Minnesota (9:55 PM)			Locusts
CNN				Business International		World News	World Sport	Larry King Live		Business International		World News Asia		World News	World Sport/MainSail	World News Asia		World News	World Sport
Discovery Channel		I Survived		Rides		Amazon Games		Zero Hour		Wild Discovery		Hour Asia		Man Made Marvels		A Haunting		Crime Stories	
Disney Channel	Mr Bean The Animated Series	Totally Spies	Art Attack/Un-[illegible] Bunny	Mickey Mouse and Friends	Lilo & Stitch	Sabrina The Animated Series	Totally Spies	Kim Possible	Mr Bean The Animated Series	That's So Raven	Wonderful World Of Disney			Suite Life Of Zack And Cody	Phil Of The Future	Mickey Mouse and Friends	Chip N Dale's Rescue Rangers	Wonderful World Of Disney	
ESPN		Pro Billiards '04 Int'l Challenge of Champs USA		World Pool League '01		Winter X Games Classic		Watersports Programming Hot Water		Table Tennis 2003 Killerspin Extreme		Pro Billiards '05 BCA Open 9-Ball C'ships Finals		Table Tennis 2003 Killerspin Extreme	Women's Golf Samsung World C'ships '05				Sportscenter Asia
ETC	The Insider Weekend	Outback Jack		Change of Heart	Elimidate	Blind Date	Fifth Wheel	Seinfeld	Ambush Makeover	The Tyra Banks Show		One Tree Hill 2		The O.C 2		Entertainment Tonight	The Insider	The Tonight Show With Jay Leno	
EWTN	Catholic Social Teaching	Angelus (3:15 PM)	ABCatholic	Angel Force	Angels Of God	Rosary With Mother Angelica	The Gospel Of John	EWTN Gallery	Lord, Have Mercy	The Journey Home Encore		Council Of Faith	Good Or Evil, Who Decides?	Daily Mass (SAP) Live		Angelus (10:15PM)	Rome Reports	Web Of Faith	
Fox News		Hannity & Colmes		On The Record With Greta Van Susteren		The O'Reilly Factor		Your World With Neil Cavuto		Fox & Friends						Fox News Live			
GMA 7	Kung Mamahalin Mo Lang Ako	Now and Forever	First Love Of A Royale Prince		Dragonball Z	Great Teacher Onizuka	La Robe de Mariage	24 Oras		Extra Challenge	Sugo	Etheria	Starstruck 3	Jewel In The Palace		Bahay Mo Ba 'To?			Saksi
Hallmark Channel	Bewitched	McLeod's Daughters IV		Cupid & Cate (3:50 PM)			Who's The Boss? II	Bewitched	The Nanny	Strong Medicine		Judging Amy		Family Plan			Family Law III (10:35PM)		Strong Medicine
HBO				New York Minute				Breakin' All The Rules			Woo			The American President				Paycheck	
IBC 13		EZ Shop				Home Shopping Network	IBC Express Balita	Pangarap Kong Jackpot		Retro TV	Good Take	Travel	Global Family Series	Japan Video Topics		Japan Video Topics	IBC News Tonite	Home Shopping Network	
JackTV	The Daily Show With Jon Stewart	The Late Show David Letterman		Raw				The Batman	Just For Laughs (Gags)	Mad TV		That 70s Show	Arrested Development	The Late Show David Letterman		The Daily Show With Jon Stewart	Comedy Central Presents	South Park	The Man Show
Lifestyle Network	Secret Gardens	The Fixer	Mission Organization	Carol Duvall	Molto Mario	Hot Off The Grill	Good Eats	Extreme Cuisine	Unwrapped	Passion For Dessert	Second Look		Look For Less	Life & Style		Who's Wedding Is It Anyway?		Road & Track	Back To Basics
MTV Philippines	MTV Screen	Spring Break	Diyes		Punk'D	Pop Inc		MTV Hits				Videography: Prodigy	Get Spotted	TRL		Sessions Christian Bautista	Pimp My Ride	Bling # 101	VH1 Video Collections
MYX		Rock MYX	My MYX	Mellow MYX	Urban MYX	Take 5	MYX Versions	MYX Firsts	Star MYX	MYXILOG	Pop MYX	MYX Daily Top Ten		Top Of The Pops	Radio MYX	MYX News	My MYX	MYX Backtrax	OPM MYX
National Geographic	Wild Family Secrets	Seconds From Disaster		Is It Real?		Air Crash Investigation		Top 5 - Mysterious Universe		Wow!		About Asia		Nat'l Geographic Specials		Air Crash Investigation		Seconds From Disaster	
NBN		Value Vision		Value Vision		Teledyaryo	Diyos Ko, Mahal Mo Ba Sila?	Tinig ng Bayan (Live)				Teledyaryo				Pilipinas Ngayon Na!		Bantay OCW With Susan K.	
Nickelodeon	Chalkzone	Blooming Nick-Valentine's Day Special		Four Eyes	My Life As A Teenage Robot	SpongeBob SquarePants	The Fairly Odd Parents	Drake & Josh	Naturally Sadie	Romeo	All That	All Grown Up	As Told By Ginger	Four Eyes	My Life As A Teenage Robot	The Adventures Of Jimmy Neutron	The Fairly Odd Parents	My Dad The Rock Star	
PBO			Hindi Mo Ako Kayang Tapakan		Ibigin Mo Ako, Lalaking Matapang				[illegible] Mga Sisiw sa Lansangan				Bukas Luluhod Ang Mga Tala				Uhaw na Hayop		
QTV	Ikaw Lang Ang Mamahalin		[illegible] Hungry Heart	The Prince Of Tennis	MMS (My Music Station)		Moms		Love At Aegean Sea	Hotelier	All In	Laugh To Laugh: Ang Kulit	My Guardian Baby		News On Q	Sana'y Muling Makapiling		MINT (Music Interactive)	
RPN 9	TV Shopping		Defenders Of The Earth	Hey Arnold	Wild Thornberries	Sponge Bob	As Told By Ginger	Entertainment Tonight	The Insider	The Real Gilligan's Island		The Cut		Paradise Hotel		Newswatch Now	Tuesday Night Trax		
SBN 21				New Life TV Shopping				Winner TV Shopping				Oras Ng Himala		Oras ng Katotohanan		SBN Music Video	Sportsdesk		
Solar Sports		WTA 2005 Tour Carlsbad by LA Semi-Finals				IBF China Open Finals Men's Singles			IBF China Open Finals Mixed Doubles			NBA Game Suns @ Cavaliers							
Sports Plus				Ray Ban Celebrity Poker Challenge				Golf Today	SMB Poker Bar Tour 4	World Game		Ultimate Fighting Championship				Party Poker.com World Open 2005			
Star Movies			Raging Bull				Twisted (6:35 PM)			A Walk In the Clouds				Love Actually				Wicker Park (11:05PM)	
Star World		The Bold & The Beautiful		General Hospital		Angel		The Simpsons	Malcolm In The Middle	Star News Asia	Friends (Series 10)	Charmed		The O.C		North Shore		Friends (Series 10)	Charmed
Studio 23		Astroboy						Get Backers	Spirits	Wazzup Wazzup	Andromeda		Smallville (8:20 PM)	Point Pleasant (9:10 PM)		News Central	Oprah		Just Shoot Me

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Across the NATION

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175,000 cubic meters of spilled oil in Semirara now under water

By Leila B. Salaverria

THE CLEANUP OF THE MASSIVE OIL SPILL IN SEMIrara, Antique from a National Power Corp. barge has to go deeper.

Though parts of the surface of 236 hectares of affected mangroves appear to be oil-free, the area underneath tells a different story.

Under the mangroves, there are about 175,000 cubic meters of soil contaminated by the fuel that had settled under water after sitting on the surface too long, according to Philippine Coast Guard spokesperson Lt. Commander Joseph Coyme.

The amount of contaminated soil was determined by Jun Ballesteros, a hazardous materials specialist from the University of the Philippines with whom the PCG's Marine Environmental Protection Command had spoken.

The contaminated soil would kill the mangroves and the marine life, which were what the cleanup was supposed to save, said Coyme.

"Though it may appear from the surface that the oil has been removed, it really just went under," Coyme said in an interview yesterday. "We cannot just let the contaminated soil stay under the water. That is not saving the ecological balance."

The spill, which the PCG said involved about 364,000 liters of fuel, took place Dec. 18, 2005 when a Napocor barge ran aground off Semirara.

But Napocor said the spill involved about 200,000 liters, and reported recently that 30 percent of affected mangrove areas and 80 percent of affected coastal areas had been cleaned.

Because of the latest finding on the amount of contaminated soil, the PCG would recommend that Napocor employ the bioremediation method to remove the fuel from the soil, Coyme said.

The PCG is supervising the cleanup, which the Napocor is required to fund and undertake.

Bioremediation involves the use of oil-eating microbes that consume petroleum-based pollutants.

Workers use the manual method, which involves spraying the affected areas with an oil dispersant and then dousing it with high-pressured water to remove the spilled fuel.

Coyme said the use of bioremediation was expected to save the lives of the mangroves and other marine life, but added the cleanup would have to be done more quickly to lessen the damage it would cause to the environment.

He, however, added the PCG was worried about whether the Napocor would be able to shoulder the increased cost since the power company was having trouble collecting its insurance claim on the oil spill.

Napocor spokesperson Dennis Gana said in an earlier interview that the company was resolving the issue concerning its insurance claims.

Energy Secretary Raphael Lotilla said as early as three weeks after the oil spill, or as early as mid-January, an assurance was already given that the oil spill had no possibility of affecting the island paradise of Boracay.

The Philippine Coast Guard confirmed this, saying there was no longer any threat on Boracay, amid concerns from various groups that the oil spill would adversely affect the tourist paradise.

Rescuers find bodies of 3 of 7 dead in S. Leyte mudslides

By Jani Arnaiz
PDI Visayas Bureau

PDI VISAYAS BUREAU

RESIDENTS of a village in Tacloban City get rescued in style by a man who offered to use his jet ski to bring people across floodwaters.

SOGOD, SOUTHERN LEYTE—RESCUERS yesterday retrieved the bodies of three of the seven persons who were buried alive during a mudslide on Sunday in Barangay Kahupian here.

Sogod Mayor Sheferred Tan said the three were found at about 5 a.m. yesterday some 150 feet below the cliff in Sitio Agas-agas, Kahupian, about 10 km from the town proper.

The bodies of Vicente Fernandez, 63; Nestor Samalca, 30; and Aniceto Mibulos, 42; were brought to the barangay hall and were later claimed by their loved ones.

Tan, however, said the three and four others who were buried in the mudslide were drivers and passengers of *habal-habal* (rented motorcycles) and not construction workers as earlier reported by the Provincial Disaster Coordinating Council (PDCC).

He said the seven were taking shelter from the rain inside an abandoned bunkhouse near the edge of the cliff.

Mounds of loose earth, triggered by six days of incessant rain, hit the bunkhouse and swept it 150 feet below.

Only the body of Roberto Abonita, 42, was recovered on Sunday afternoon, as the rain hampered rescue operations.

Rescue teams, composed of members of the Southern Leyte Emergency Response Team (Solert) and soldiers from the Army's 43rd Infantry Battalion, continued to look for the bodies of three others identified as Rogelio Sarco, 30; Fernando Sarco, 35; Anita Sarco, 35.

Tan said the three were presumed dead because it was unlikely that they would survive after being buried in a pile of earth.

Incessant rains for six days also triggered flash floods and landslides in nine towns in Southern Leyte, prompting the provincial government to place the province under a state of calamity.

Three persons were declared missing after they were swept by floodwaters in Barangay Gabi, San Francisco town on Panaon Island in Southern Leyte.

Supt. Alfredo Sabornido, provincial director in Southern Leyte, said the three were last seen by co-workers riding a bus on their way home to Cebu.

But, he added, it was not known whether they reached their destination because they had not received any calls.

Reports from the PDCC said the three had been swept by floodwaters in Barangay Gabi.

Landslides were also reported in Barangay Catig, Liloan town, leaving three Barangays of Estela, Pandan and Caligangan isolated.

The towns of San Francisco, Liloan and San Ricardo were hit by landslides and floods in 2003, which killed 150 people.

A total of 924 families, or 3,558 people, from 14 barangays of San Francisco, in Panaon Island, Southern Leyte have been forced to leave their homes after continuous heavy rains for over a week caused the rivers to swell and trigger numerous landslides.

The evacuees are now staying in the town's gym, parish center and schools.

Last Saturday, the municipal government, led by town mayor Lorraine Asares and Vice Mayor Diego Yuboc, went around the barangays and dispatched dump trucks to convince the residents to move to safer grounds.

Traumatized by the December 2003 landslides, where about 120 people died in Punta, a fishing village in San Francisco, the residents heeded the appeal of local officials who have been vigilant every time continuous rains are experienced.

The small dam for Habay's irrigation system was damaged as Habay River was swollen, forcing over 250 families in the adjoining Barangays of Habay, Gabi, and Bungawisan to leave their homes. Over 100 families have also left Marayag due to flooding. *With a report from Joey Gabieta and Jhunnex Napallacan, PDI Visayas Bureau*

Poverty in Cordillera worsened, says study

BAGUIO CITY—CORDILLERA poverty worsened in 2005, with Mt. Province now competing with Ifugao as the country's fourth poorest province.

Using new statistical instruments to measure poverty, the Regional Development Council (RDC) in the Cordillera concluded that 2005 had been "the least performing year" for the first region created after the 1986 Edsa Revolt, said Leon Dacanay, Cordillera assistant director of the National Economic and Development Authority (Neda).

But the "dismal" growth pattern has not convinced the region's largely indigenous peoples' population to embrace mining to alleviate poverty here, the Neda admitted.

No new mining investments poured into the region, said Juan Ngalob, Neda Cordillera director, although the RDC has adopted a policy on "responsible mining that is anchored on public acceptability."

Benguet hosted the country's oldest mines, like Benguet Corp., but both Benguet and Mt. Province have rejected offers to rebuild a mining industry in their areas, Ngalob said.

Quoting an Ifugao official, Dacanay said "we may not have money, but we are not hungry."

The National Statistical Coordination Board (NSCB) reported a significant reduction in the number of poor Cordillera families, after it tallied a drop from 43.6 percent in 2000 to 34.5 percent in 2003.

But last year, the region fell short of meeting its 670,000-job target, generating jobs for only 622,000 Cordillerans.

Between January and July last year, the Cordillera economy could only accommodate 3,000 new employees for its service sector. *Vincent Cabreza, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*

Cop tagged in slay attempt on mayor charged

CAMP OLIVAS, PAMPANGA—THE Philippine National Police filed murder and frustrated murder charges against a police officer tagged by his alleged cohorts as the brains in the ambush that wounded a Pampanga mayor and killed his aide on Sunday.

Chief Supt. Alejandro Lapinid, Central Luzon police director, gave the main suspect, Chief Insp. Jorge Bar Bustos, until Feb. 17 to give himself up to authorities.

Lapinid said while the manhunt for Bustos has been expanded by the national police headquarters to Metro Manila and other regions, arresting officers have been instructed to apply reasonable force if the major resists arrest.

"There is no shoot-to-kill order on him. We want him to peacefully submit and avail himself of due process," Lapinid told reporters here on Monday.

The charges, which were filed at the Pampanga prosecutor on Sunday, came after the police arrested two alleged hired assassins.

In their extra-judicial confession made in the presence of a lawyer, Jesus Sarmiento, 22, and Jefferson Perez, 23, implicated Bustos and his brother, Masantol Vice Mayor Jorge Jay Bustos, in the 12:30 a.m. attack that wounded Masantol Mayor Peter Flores, 58, and killed SPO4 Nicanor Yabut, 54.

There were still no strong piece of evidence linking the vice mayor to the assassination plan, Lapinid said. The vice mayor has since gone into "hiding," making no contact whatsoever to authorities, he added. Vice Mayor Bustos has not also replied to INQUIRER calls to air his side.

Negotiations for the payoff of P120,000 in Porac on Feb. 8 and the execution of the attack in Masantol were led by no less than Chief Insp. Bustos, according to Senior Supt. Leonardo Espina, Pampanga police director, quoting confessions obtained from the two suspects.

Aside from Bustos, Sarmiento and Perez, the charges also covered Cesar Sarmiento and Pete Soriano who allegedly took part in the attack. *Tonette Orejas, PDI Central Luzon Desk*

Subic execs declare festival successful

SUBIC BAY FREEPORT—THE THREE-day "Subik! Subik! Festival," participated in by various stakeholders in this freeport, Zambales, Bataan and Olongapo City, succeeded in generating awareness of this investment haven's potential for tourism-related activities, officials here said.

Subic Bay Metropolitan Authority Administrator Armand Arreza said the festival's success could be gauged by the turnout of participants in various events and the grand parade on Saturday that exceeded the organizers' expectations.

The festival featured the best destinations and locations in the country for a wide range of adventure and ecotourism activities. It also highlighted the tourist attractions of Bataan, Olongapo City, Subic Bay Freeport and Zambales.

"I think we were successful in generating awareness of what Subic and its outlying communities have to offer not only among local but also international tour operators," Arreza said.

"We were able to show our capacity to hold events as big as the Subic festival and upgrade our products for international market," he said.

George Lorenzana, chair of the Greater Subic Bay Tourism Bureau, the lead organizer of the event, was ecstatic.

"We are all very happy with the way things turned out," he said.

Lorenzana said the event turned out very successful even if it was planned barely a month ago and "practically with zero money." *Ansbert Joaquin, PDI Central Luzon Desk*

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	125mg Susp x 105mL	332.00	27%
	250mg Susp x 30mL	235.00	19%
	250mg Susp x 105mL	573.75	28%
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ECOZONE PUSHED

GMA wants tax perks in Clark

CLARK SPECIAL ECONOMIC Zone—President Macapagal-Arroyo wants to place this special economic zone under the Philippine Economic Zone Authority (Peza) so investors here will also enjoy the tax and duty-free privileges given to locators at the Subic Bay Freeport.

But the President, during a meeting with reporters at the Holiday Inn Hotel on Friday, said the move would depend on the Supreme Court's final decision on whether business locators in Clark were covered by tax and duty-free privileges under Republic Act No. 7227 or the Bases Conversion and Development Act.

Ms Arroyo has certified as urgent the bills restoring the tax incentives to Clark and other economic zones not covered by RA 7227. These are House Bills 4900 and 4901, sponsored by Tarlac Rep. Jesli Lapus.

HB 4900 seeks tax amnesty for locators in Clark and in the special economic zones in Camp John Hay (Baguio City) and Poro Point (San Fernando City, La Union).

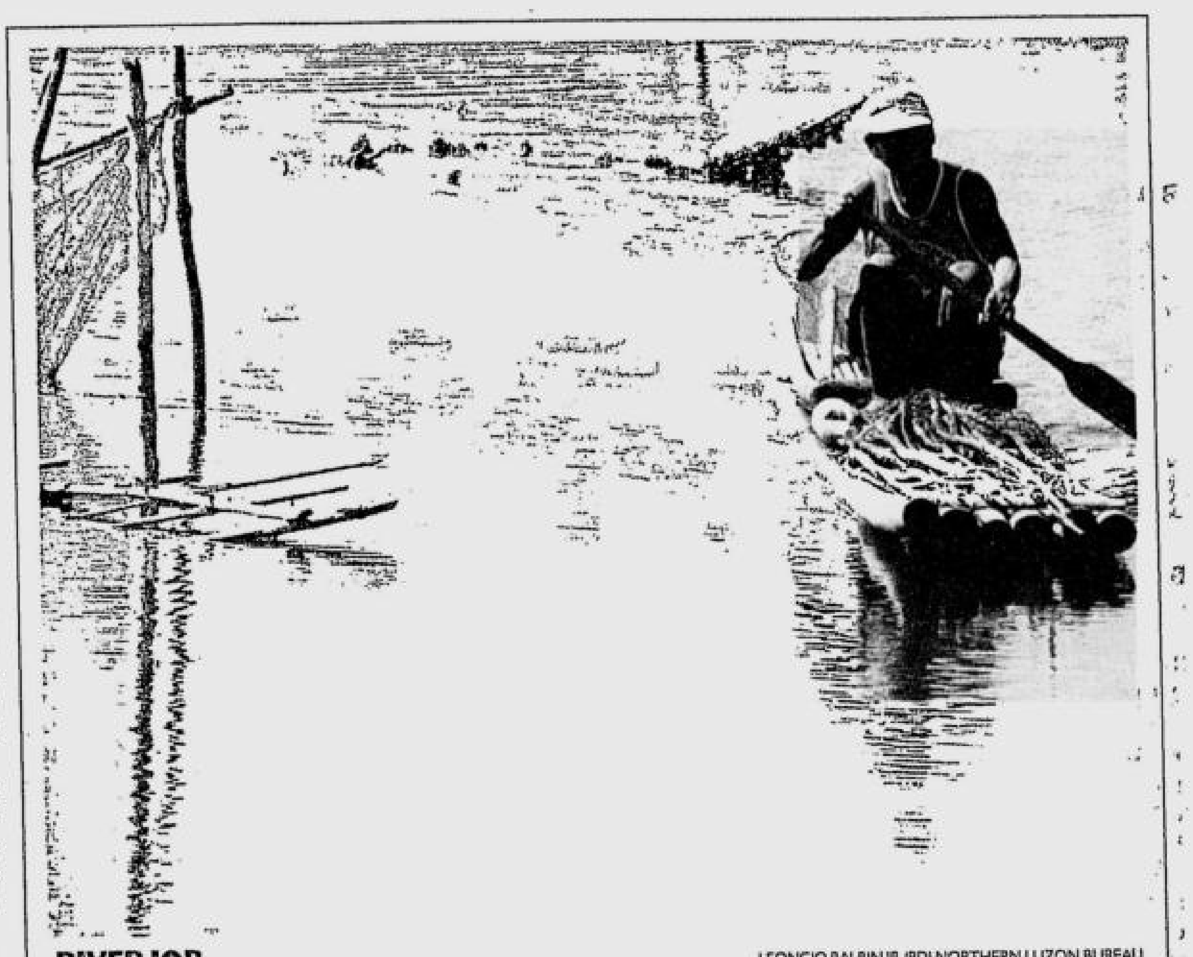
HB 4901, on the other hand, seeks amendments to RA 7227 to include the three special economic zones as tax and duty-free zones like Subic in Zambales.

Antonio Ng, Clark Development Corp. president, said the bills would provide a reprieve to more than 300 locators in Clark.

"With the approval of the two House bills, the locators and investors in Clark will be given assurance that the incentives being provided them will be honored and will prevent them from scouting other areas for their operations," said Ng.

Then President Fidel Ramos authorized the tax incentives received by Clark locators through Presidential Proclamation 420.

Jun Malig, PDI Central Luzon Desk


RIVER JOB
LEONCIO BALBIN JR./PDI NORTHERN LUZON BUREAU
A fisherman checks his fish cages in a river in Darapidap, Candon City in Ilocos Sur.

5 GenSan robbers slain in clash with cops

GENERAL SANTOS CITY—FIVE suspected members of a robbery gang operating in Central Mindanao were killed in a clash with members of the police's Regional Intelligence and Investigation Division (RIID) here on Saturday night.

Supt. Willie Dangane, RIID and special operations group chief, said his group has been tracking down the suspects after the group robbed the Davao City-bound Ablaya couple early this week while on their way to the Bualong City terminal.

Police said the victims had just left the Land Bank branch here where they encashed a check for P100,000.

From there, the couple were reportedly trailed by the suspects and robbed before reaching the terminal.

On Saturday evening, Dangane said an informant tipped him on the group's presence in Lapu-lapu Street.

When the lawmen arrived at the area, the suspects were allegedly robbing the Davao-Dadiangas Distribution System Inc., one of the biggest distributor of groceries here.

Police said the suspects, armed with handguns and riding on two motorcycles, held the office's guard at gunpoint and took with them P40,000 in cash.

Police were already waiting outside as the suspects emerged from the office. An exchange of gunfire followed.

A policeman, SPO2 Gonzalo Taladtad, suffered a cut in the eyebrow during the encounter.

Aquiles Zonio, PDI Mindanao Bureau

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10 teen detainees bolt Pasig City jail

By Edson C. Tandoc Jr.

TEN MINORS, WITH AGES ranging from 14 to 17, escaped from the Pasig City Jail yesterday morning by cutting the iron grills of the window in their cell.

The incident led to the relief of city jail warden Supt. Linda Minggoa. She was replaced by Supt. Pio Capistrano who immediately ordered his men to go after the escapees.

More than 10 hours after the prison break was reported, jail officials still refused to issue a statement to media persons seeking an official statement.

But some jail guards confirmed that the children, jailed for charges ranging from robbery to drug possession and even rape, managed to escape from their cell on the second floor of the City Jail Building B at about 4 a.m.

Most of the escapees were jailed just three to four months ago, but one of them had been in jail since November 2003. One of them was jailed for alleged rape in February 2004, according to a document given to the INQUIRER.

There are at least 23 minors in the cell, separated from adult suspects, but only 10 joined the jailbreak.

The escape, carried out just as the barangay curfew for minors expired at 4 a.m., went unnoticed for more than four hours, until jail guards conducted the morning head count.

The jailbreak placed the city in the spotlight for the third time in two weeks, following the PhilSports Arena stampede on Feb. 4 and the discovery of a shabu den on Feb. 10.

For 'bleeders,' love is a just a touch away

By Dulce Festin-Baybay
Contributor

HIGH hopes for PWH (from left) Yancy Doroteo, Danilo Miranda, Ryan Dionisio, Eugene de la Cruz, Ed Lacanlale and Randolf Apanay.

RODEL ROTONI

RYAN EMMANUEL DIONISIO, 15, YANCY Doroteo, 15, and Eugene de la Cruz, 18, may look like normal teenagers. Yet inside their bodies, they have one thing in common. They have a congenital bleeding problem, a rare form of sickness. They are known as PWH or People With Hemophilia.

The three—bleeders for life—are not allowed to play basketball or soccer as teenagers would want to do, since it is dangerous for them to get hit.

Even if they can go to school, they may or may not graduate on time, if they start to bleed for various reasons. In serious cases, they need to be confined in a hospital, for weeks or even months at a time, for treatment and blood transfusion.

People with hemophilia do not bleed any faster than normal, but they bleed for a longer time. Women who have the hemophilia gene are called carriers. For each of a woman carrier's children, there is a 50% chance that a son will have hemophilia, and a 50% chance that a daughter will carry the gene.

If treated immediately and given the proper care and medicine, persons with hemophilia can live long. Eugene's uncle, Danilo Miranda, is now 52 years old. He had to stop schooling after his first year in high school because his knee became swollen due to internal bleeding. He had to stay in bed for six months, with crushed ice wrapped in a thick towel on his knee, to stop the swelling. It worked for a while until he had to have blood transfusion twice a day.

Due to his delicate state, he had to stay at home and work as a helper in his aunt's store. He spends his free time watching television and cannot leave the house unless he uses the car since using public transport is dangerous for him.

Recalls 38-year-old Randolf Apanay: "I stayed in a government hospital's free ward for nine months in the year 2001. Even with the amount of plasma they used on me, given by the hospital and various donors, I felt I wasn't getting well. I became depressed and engaged in self-pity." He was transferred to the UST Hospital where he stayed for a month before he was discharged. Now married and the father of two sons, Randolf works as an illustrator for the Philippine Air Force.

Bleeders for life like Ryan, Yancy, Eugene, Danilo and Randolf are leading heroic lives, struggling to stay alive and healthy by having a positive attitude, being productive, supported by families and friends.

In 1993, a group of doctors and parents organized Haplos (Hemophilia Association of the Philippines for Love and Service), the first lay support group for hemophiliacs.

Foundation secretary and director Eduardo O. Lacanlale said the acronym, meaning "touch," is a literal way of expressing love and support, especially when caregivers gently rub or massage the swollen joints of PWH.

Haplos has 200 active members who meet every other month for psycho-social support, among others.

Ninety percent of PWH have income below P20,000 per month. Only ten percent can afford the factor concentrate, the standard form of treatment.

For those who want to know more about hemophilia or want to join as volunteers, donate blood, or are interested in other forms of support to PWH or Haplos, call (632) 732-5085 during office hours, and (632) 922-66-83 after office hours.

Worker dies in explosion

By Nancy C. Carvajal

A MAN WAS KILLED WHEN A tank containing carbon dioxide exploded inside a refilling plant in Caloocan City at noon yesterday.

Crisanto Oliverio, 52, a construction worker who was repairing the plant's roof, was killed instantly after he was hit by flying debris.

The incident took place inside the Caloocan Gas Corp. compound, located in the city's industrial park along Gen. Luis Street in Kaybiga, Caloocan City.

The impact of the explosion was so forceful that Oliverio's body was cut into two after the tank, which weighed around 60 kilos and was about three-and-a-half feet long, slammed into him, said Francisco Banez, a technical supervisor at the factory. Several tanks were also thrown as far as 20 meters away from the site of the explosion. The compound is a refilling station for carbon dioxide tanks.

Northern Police District director Chief Supt. Raul Gonzales said he would recommend the plant's temporary closure to allow a technical team to inspect it to ensure the workers' safety. He added that although carbon dioxide is not flammable, it could still pose a danger to workers if there are no safety measures in place.

1 more dead in Tondo blast

By Margaux C. Ortiz

THE GRENADE EXPLOSION ON Sunday afternoon at the Parola Compound in Tondo, Manila that killed four people has claimed another life.

Roger Buhayan, 53, of Gate 13 Area B, Parola Compound, died of shrapnel wounds at the Gat Andres Bonifacio Hospital hours after the incident, according to PO2 Jerico Jimenez of the Manila Police District (MPD) Homicide Section. Buhayan was drinking with his neighbors in the compound when suspects Eugene Ortige and Alex Caniojan (not Eugene Candilasa and Alex Laniojan as earlier reported by the police) approached the group and mauled Rodrigo Ogatis.

The police had reported earlier that the suspects' target was Buhayan. Jimenez, however, said it was Ogatis.

After a few minutes, witnesses heard an explosion, caused by an MK2 grenade which Ortige was allegedly carrying. Ortige and Caniojan were killed instantly along with two bystanders. Ten other persons, including four children, were injured.

METROBRIEFS

Tree planting on Valentine's Day

A PROENVIRONMENT group has unique plans for celebrating Valentine's Day today—members will plant trees to show their love for abandoned children and the elderly. Regina Paterno, president of Winner Foundation, said they will plant at least 187 fruit trees on the grounds of the Hospicio de San Jose, a shelter for older people and abandoned children in the City of Manila. "This is our way of celebrating Valentine's Day because this day is not only meant for lovers. It's also a day to show our love and concern for the environment," Paterno told the INQUIRER.

Tina G. Santos

No more illegal parking in Manila

ARAY KO PO! MAGBABAGO NA PO !
Ooo

THE MANILA government formally launched yesterday a campaign to make the city's traffic management system more efficient. From now on, wheel clamps or a tire lock system will be used to immobilize cars parked on streets or in areas designated as "no parking" or "tow away" zones. Vehicle owners must pay a P900 fine to the city government before the device can be removed. They must pay the fine within three hours or their vehicle will be towed and impounded. A car owner who attempts to remove or destroy the wheel clamp will be fined P1,000, or face imprisonment of one month. Meanwhile, the Manila City Council has created a special committee that would investigate the increasing rate of car theft incidents in the city. Councilor Greco Belgica sponsored the passage of a resolution creating the special committee in aid of legislation after he lost his 1997 Mazda sports car last week.

Tina G. Santos

Puppets to teach youth about health

THE CHURCH of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, in cooperation with officials of Taytay, Rizal, the Philippine National Red Cross, and the Rotary Club of Taytay, will hold a family health fair and exhibit for students on Feb. 23 and 24. The health fair, which will be held at the Barangay San Juan multi-purpose covered court in Taytay, Rizal, includes lectures, puppet shows, and an exhibit to educate the youth on diseases, the dangers of smoking, drinking and drug use, nutrition, hygiene and first aid.

Car hijackers kill stude

By Jocelyn R. Uy

A TEENAGER BECAME THE latest casualty of car jackers who struck at BF Homes, Parañaque Sunday night.

Richard Capili, a 19-year-old nursing student, was shot dead by three men who also took the van he was driving. SPO1 Generoso Partolan said the incident took place inside the subdivision, in front of the LBC Landco Center Mall on Gil Puyat Street corner President's Avenue, at around 6:30 p.m. on Sunday.

Capili had parked in front of the mall to wait for his sister. As he sat inside his grey Toyota Revo (plate number WRY-883), three men boarded the van.

"According to witnesses, a scuffle ensued between the victim and the suspects. The victim might have resisted the suspects so he was shot," Partolan told the INQUIRER yesterday. Case investigator, P02 Tio Calvo said in his report that witnesses saw the suspects maul Capili before they heard a gunshot.

The teenager was able to get out of the car and cry for help. But one of the suspects, armed with a .45-cal pistol, shot him, the report said. The suspects then fled on board the victim's car, leaving Capili slumped on the pavement, said Calvo. According to Remie, the victim's father, his children had stopped at a grocery and a drugstore before going to a bookstore. "My daughter said she was already inside the bookstore when she heard gunshots. She saw her brother slumped on the pavement of the parking lot," Remie said in a phone interview .

The teenager was brought to the Parañaque Medical Center but he was declared dead on arrival. He sustained a lone gunshot wound on his right armpit. The bullet passed through the arteries of his lungs before it reached his heart. Parañaque police chief Supt. Ronald Estilles said an artist's sketch of one of the suspects had already been sent out to different police stations.

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What's so special about these top cops?

ON TARGET
Ramon Tulfo

THE NERVE OF DIR. VIDAL Querol, chief of the National Capital Region Police Office (NCRPO), when he said he was having the Pasig City police chief investigated for failing to stop the operation of the "shabu flea market" right in the heart of the city!

If there is anybody to be investigated, it should be Querol because he's the Big Boss of the police in Metro Manila.

By putting the blame on his subordinate, Senior Supt. Raul Medina, Pasig police chief, Querol was trying escape responsibility. If Querol has any *delicadeza* at all, he should ask to be relieved on the principle of command responsibility.

If a regional commander could be sacked for not being able to stop "jueteng" in his region, much more so a regional commander under whose very nose dangerous drugs were being sold.

Querol cannot escape responsibility for the open, large-scale selling of shabu (methamphetamine hydrochloride) at the Mapayapa Compound in Pasig City.

The raid was a slap on Querol because it was conducted by another group, the anti-illegal drugs task force under Dir. Marcelo Ele Jr.

I'm reminded about the Japanese police many years ago. A policeman in a town far from Tokyo raped a housewife while he was pounding his beat.

As a consequence, the offending cop's immediate supervisor and the town's police chief committed hara kiri (suicide). The mayor of the town resigned.

I'm not saying Querol should commit suicide in shame. The least he can do is ask to be relieved for incompetence.

Querol's anti-drugs task force chief, Supt. Jerry Valeroso, is allegedly his fair-haired boy. Valeroso raided drug dens in Cavite, way out of his jurisdiction, but why wasn't he able to touch the 60 drug dens inside the Mapayapa Compound in Pasig?

* * *

Of course, the persons to be blamed for the existence of the shabu flea market are Medina, Pasig police chief, and Chief Supt. Oscar Valenzuela, director of the Eastern Police District (EPD).

The EPD headquarters is only a few meters away from the flea market for drugs.

In this country, only the small fry get to be punished for wrongdoing. The big fish get only a slap on the wrist.

Director General Art Lomibao, PNP chief, told me that he would order Medina's relief if the raid yielded positive results. He told me this as we were planning the raid together with my brother Erwin and Dir. Marcelo Ele. Lomibao repeated this to me at the shabu flea market after it was raided by 100 fully armed police commandos and members of Ele's national anti-drugs task force. Lomibao scolded Medina at the scene.

But so far, only the police community precinct chief, a mere inspector (police lieutenant), was sacked along with his men.

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WHAT'S INSIDE

- 2 unlikely heroes for Purefoods /A20
- Desamito upsets favored Ballester /A21
- Heat melt Pistons as Wade sizzles /A22

MVP Tangkay out of Finals decider

PBL punishes temperamental Painter

By Jasmine W. Payo

THE LEAGUE'S MOST VALUABLE Player will be missing the most important game of the conference.

Rain or Shine will be without Jojo Tangkay when the Elasto Painters and the Magnolia Wizards clash in the winner-take-all Game 5 of the PBL Heroes Cup title showdown on Thursday at the San Andres Gym.

The Commissioner's Office suspended the Painters' main man yesterday for committing his second unsportsmanlike foul in the series.

Tangkay, named MVP just last week, punched Magnolia's top gunner Arwind Santos on the nose in the closing seconds of Game 4 last Sunday. The Wizards won the match in overtime, 61-57, to tie the best-of-five series at 2-all.

GAME THURSDAY
(*San Andres Gym*)
3 p.m.—Rain or Shine vs Magnolia
(Game 5 Finals)

In Game 3, Tangkay was also slapped with an unsportsmanlike foul after also hitting Santos in the face.

"It pains me to suspend Jojo, who is the MVP of the conference, but I have to enforce the rules of the league," said commissioner Chino Trinidad in a statement. "He should not have done it, he had already been given a warning."

The commissioner also warned Tangkay, who was fined a mere P600, that a repetition will warrant a lifetime ban from the league.

Still, coach Caloy Garcia believes the Painters, who blew a 2-0 lead in the title series, have enough in their offensive arsenal to remain competitive in Thursday's do-or-die contest.

"With or without Tangkay, we are going to play our game on Thursday," said Garcia.

Tangkay led the league in scoring with an average of 16.45 points in the elimination round. His numbers dipped dramatically in the finals series, norming only 8.5 points and 8.7 rebounds.

The 6-foot-1 veteran, though, regained his form in Game 4 by leading the Painters with a team-high 18 markers.

FOR punching Magnolia's Arwind Santos twice in as many games, Jojo Tangkay (above) will miss the all-or-nothing Game 5. EDWIN BACASMAS

"There was no intention on the part of Jojo to hit Arwind," Painters' team manager Boy Lapid said in a statement. "We instructed our players to make a quick foul in the hope that they will miss their charities.

"We did not intend to maim anybody."

The Painters were on the verge of claiming their second straight title and seventh overall after winning Game 1 (70-68 in overtime) and Game 2 (75-73) of the series. But the Wizards fought back in Game 3 (80-70) before that Game 4 61-57 win in overtime.

PFF head says 'godfather' behind ouster conspiracy

By Musong R. Castillo

NO LESS THAN THE FOOTBALL "GODFAther," Jose Vito Borromeo, is behind moves to oust Johnny Romualdez as president of the Philippine Football Federation.

This was contained in a press statement handcarried by Romualdez to the INQUIRER editorial offices yesterday.

It said PFF "sources" learned about a recent gathering, hosted by Borromeo, among select provincial association presidents to hear out Asian Football Confederation official Cristy Ramos' gripes against the PFF.

Ramos, the former president of both the Philippine Olympic Committee and the national women's football federation, blasted the PFF last week for its failure to send the RP women's Under-19 team to a world qualifying tournament in Thailand next month.

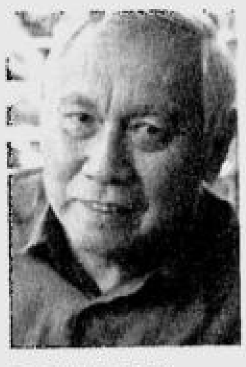
Ramos said the non-participation was a result of the "PFF's negligence" in not being able to forward the Philippines' entry form to the tournament on time.

Borromeo admitted to the INQUIRER in a telephone interview last night that he indeed hosted the gathering. But he said that the meeting did not discuss moves to oust Romualdez.

He said the group talked about how to make Romualdez "a proper president."

"We don't want to kick him [Romualdez] out, we want to make him become a proper president," said Borromeo, who is also the president of the national Capital Region Football Association.

"*Ayaw namin ng gulo* (we don't want trouble). We just want to say our piece."



ROMUALDEZ

Romualdez said Laguna's Arturo Pacificador, Cebu's Jonathan Maximo and Rizal's Emigdio Tanjuatco III were the football association presidents present during the meeting.

The statement said Pacificador took the opportunity to also "gripe about the PFF," and that Maximo, a member of the PFF board, is "known to always play both sides."

Romualdez said Borromeo's group intends to use the PFF Congress scheduled Feb. 25 in Iloilo as a political arena.

The statement also pointed out that Borromeo had reneged on his pledge to release P1.5 million for the RP team in the 23rd Southeast Asian Games last month after Romualdez had "refused to heed his [Borromeo's] advise to bring in [trainer Juan] Cutillas and to train [the team] in Baguio, instead of China."

PFF competitions director Pablito Araneta said that Romualdez still has the numbers and any move to unseat him "will only serve to further unite his allies for the PFF election scheduled for 2007."

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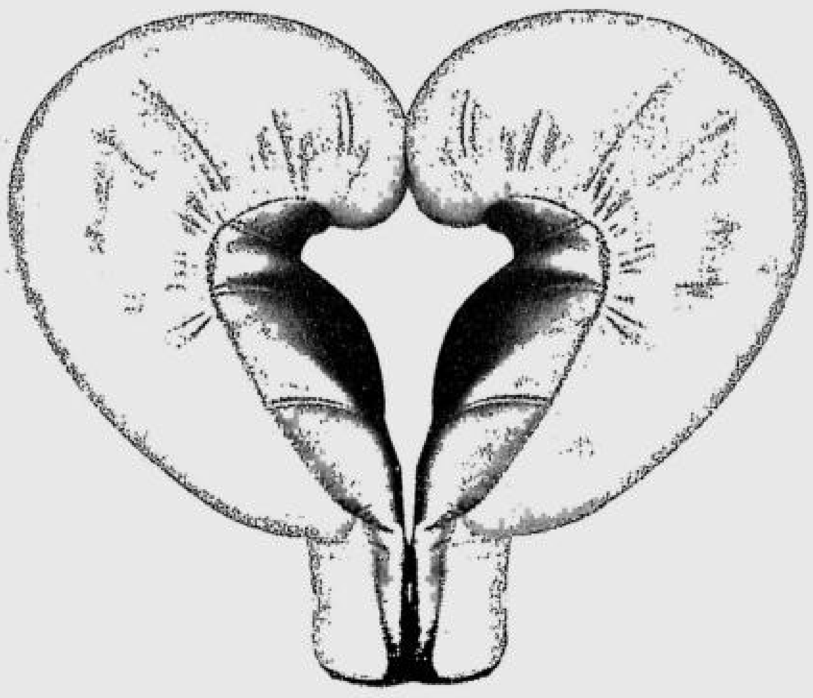

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GONZALES: Big start

Gonzales, Sanchez down French foes

FILIPINO GRANDMASTER-CANDIDATE JAYson Gonzales bested French John Henneteau at the start of the 20th International Cannes Chess Festival Sunday at the Palais Festival Hall in Cannes, France.

Gonzales, the country's top scorer in the 2004 Chess Olympiad, handled the white pieces with precision to prevail in 41 moves of an English Opening and join compatriot and Paris-based IM Joseph Sanchez among the early leaders.

Sanchez, a native of Cebu City and former trainer of Filipino GM Mark Paragua, also handled white to beat another local player in 33 moves of a Caro-Kann defense while countryman GM Nelson Mariano II ended his game in a draw after 53 moves of a Sicilian Defense.

"*Nawa'y makuha ko na dito ang huling* GM norm *ko para makumpleto na ang* GM status *ko* (I hoping to get my final GM norm here to complete my GM status)," said the 33-year-old Gonzales through text message.

Gonzales' first GM result came in the 2004 Calvia Open where he finished third with 7.0 points in nine rounds. He fell half a point off a norm in the World Chess Olympiad in Majorca, Spain, after finishing with 8.0 points in 11 matches. Gonzales placed sixth in the individual classification on Board 4.

He earned his second GM result in the Asian Zonal eliminations in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, last September.

Among the favorites are GM Igor Miladinovic of Serbia and Montenegro (Elo 2607), GM Sergey Fedorchuk of Ukraine (2590) and GM Ivan Ivanisevic, also of Serbia and Montenegro (2588). *Marlon Bernardino, contributor*

2 unlikely heroes for Purefoods

TWO PUREFOODS MAINSTAYS, BOTH NEOPHYTES IN A PBA FInals, played like grizzled veterans in the Giants' 103-97 win over the Red Bulls in Sunday's Game 3 of the San Mig Coffee Fiesta Conference title showdown.

Rookie Jondan Salvador and sophomore guard Paul Artadi came through with clutch plays when they mattered most to help the Giants score a breakthrough win in the series, and avoid falling into a 0-3 hole where no team in the 31-year history of the title playoffs has come out of.

Thrust into the starting unit in lieu of Marc Pingris, Salvador, picked fourth overall in the last Rookie Draft, rose to the occasion and pumped in 14 points, the last on a reverse layup off a perfect feed from Kerby Raymundo that gave Purefoods a 97-90 cushion.

Artadi, meanwhile, proved to be a steady presence at the backcourt, providing the leadership and spunk during a decisive stretch in the first half that allowed Purefoods to take control.

"There was a surprise package in this Game 3," said Purefoods Chunkee coach Ryan Gregorio. "Somebody whom I have not used for a long time but delivered the goods for us—Paul Artadi.

"Maybe you have forgotten Paul Artadi but he can singlehandedly break Red Bull's press."

The former University of the East star held his own against the Bulls' bevy of point guards, contributing six points, four assists and two steals while coming off the bench.

The two gave Purefoods fresh legs and the key hits that allowed the Giants' bench to outscore its counterpart for the first time in the best-of-seven title showdown, 31-21.

INSPIRED GAME: Paul Artadi shakes off Red Bull's Topex Robinson in Game 3. EDWIN BACASMAS

Patriots repulse Jaguars

THE LA SALLE-DASmariñas Patriots woke up from a slumber in the third period and turned back the Philippine School of Business Administration Jaguars, 69-62, yesterday in the 13th National Capital Region Athletic Association (NCRAA) men's basketball tournament at the Olivarez College gym.

JR Rosales fired 21 points to spark DLSU-D to its third triumph in six games.

Earlier, Jun Perlas unloaded 16 points to lead National College of Business and Arts to an 87-77 decision of AMA Computer College.

The Arellano University Flaming Arrows and the St. Francis Doves also stayed unbeaten.

James Martinez sank 19 points for the Flaming Arrows, who stormed to their eighth straight win with an 80-66 crushing of Polytechnic University of the Philippines.

Michael Rabor scored 21 points for the Doves, who notched their seventh straight win at the expense of NCBA, 80-68. In women's play the PMI Lady Admirals downed PUP, 69-52.

GAMES TOMORROW
(*La Salle-Dasmariñas gym*)
10:30 a.m.—PSBA vs PMI (court 1), NCBA vs CCM (court 2)
12 noon—La Salle-Dasmarinas vs ACSAT, Olivarez College vs PATTS
1:30 p.m.—st. Francis vs PUP, La Salle-Dasmarinas vs PUP (women)

CSA spikers a win away from crown

COLEGIO SAN AGUSTIN (CSA) DEMOLished St. Scholastica, 25-2, 25-6, to sweep the elimination round and move a win shy of retaining the Elementary (Competitive) division crown of the 11th Women's Volleyball League Sunday at the Ateneo Grade School gym in Quezon City.

The Dasmariñas Village-based squad will face in the finals slated Feb. 26 the Diliman Preparatory School (DPS), a team they have beaten twice in the preliminaries.

The DPS crew clinched the second championship berth after repulsing pesky Poveda Learning Center, 25-22, 25-21.

Quirimit rules Tour qualifying time trial race

ARNEL Quirimit
VAL HANDUMON

ARNEL QUIRIMIT, THE 2003 TOUR CHAMPIon, topped the individual time trial of the 2006 Tour Pilipinas qualifying in Tagaytay City yesterday, clocking one hour, 13 minutes and 8.74 seconds over the 40-kilometer route.

Michael Reyes, another Tour veteran, was second in 1:13:36.97 and Rener Clauna was third in 1:14:05.62 on the second day of qualifying for this summer's 10-stage Tour scheduled from April 20 to 30 in Luzon.

Rounding out the top 10 in the ITT hosted by Tagaytay City Mayor Abraham "Bambol" Tolentino and supervised by the Philippine National Cycling Association headed by Paquito Rivas were Anthony Miranda (1:14:36.96), Santy Barnachea (1:15:04.76), Oscar Rindole (1:15:11.33), Joel Calderon (1:15:11.75), Johnny Bautista (1:15:38.59), Anthony Abellera (1:16:05.36) and Reynaldo Navarro (1:16:06.09).

Baler Ravina ruled the first day of qualifying—a 147.4-km massed start race.

A total of 180 cyclists vied in the two-day qualifying for the Tour which is being organized anew by Dos-1 headed by Gary Cayton. Eighty cyclists will join in this year's Tour seeded bets Warren Davadilla, the 2005 champion; Frederick Feliciano, Rhyan Tanguilig, second and third placer, respectively; and top rookie Renato Sambrano.

Cantada corners Konica—and how

SPECTATOR

Al S. Mendoza

SOMETIME AGO—WAS IT 2001?—I HEARD someone say, "That guy will never win a major tournament."

The "someone" who said that was then one of the country's leading lights in Philippine golf. He still is.

The "guy" he was referring to is none other than Gerard Cantada.

I didn't reprimand that "someone" for downgrading Gerard. Gerard was so overweight you won't think he could really win a big one.

But then, in 2002, Gerard almost won the Philippine Open at Wack Wack. He had crowded the opening round leaders before eventually finishing a fighting fourth.

You know what Gerard, overweight then as he still is today, did after receiving his prize of P200,000?

He gave half of it to the victims of the Mt. Mayon Volcano eruption that year.

God must have been impressed by Gerard's kindness that the following year, He made Gerard the winner of the 3rd Konica Minolta National Pro-Am, which was then known as the U-Bix/Riviera National Pro-Am, at the Riviera Golf Club in Silang, Cavite. Gerard did it with his amateur partner, JR Tanpinco of Bacolod.

Other than God's intervention, what seems to be the message of all of that?

You don't judge anyone by his appearance, in the same manner that you don't judge a book by its cover.

But a bit of history first before I proceed discoursing on Cantada's improbable feats as a 300 lb-plus athlete.

The Pro-Am was born in 1958 at Fort Bonifacio with pros and amateurs as partners hitting one ball alternately. It died in 1996 when Fort Bonifacio was privatized. It was revived by U-Bix Corp. chair and CEO Bert Bravo in 2001 in partnership with the National Golf Association of the Philippines.

Of course, nobody was surprised when Bert Bravo, a topnotch lawyer, took it upon himself to revive and personally bankroll the fabled event. He has staged three big tournaments in the Nineties at the Manila Golf Club, Wack Wack and Manila Southwoods where he almost single-handedly held the NGAP-organized 1997 Philippine Open.

Noli Kempis and Erwin Vinluan won the U-Bix/Riviera Pro-Am in 2001, followed by Raul and Paul Miñoza in 2002.

When Cantada and Tanpinco won in 2003, everybody dismissed the feat as "pure luck." Again, Cantada's weight was the culprit.

The tournament was scrapped in 2004 chiefly to add that year's purse to the 2005 edition to sweeten the pot to P1.5 million.

Again, Cantada weighed 300 lb-plus in 2005.

Again, Cantada won the tournament with Tanpinco in 2005.

No team has won the tournament three in a row since its birth 48 years ago.

Thus, when the 300 lb-plus Cantada and Tanpinco won the 5th Konica Minolta Pro-Am at Riviera's Langer last Saturday, everybody stopped talking.

Suddenly, Cantada wasn't just a winner three successive times. Together with Tanpinco, Cantada also rewrote Pro-Am history by becoming the tournament's first winners three in a row.

Oh, yes, the legendary Ben Arda won it six times—the most by anyone. But not three straight, even though he won it three times on three different years with the now-departed Simplicio Taguiam.

"I can't remember a team winning it three straight times," said Taby Tabaniag, 86, the acknowledged father of the Pro-Am, who conceptualized the unique event in 1956.

So, who says size—if not weight—matters in golf?

"Now I can relate to Gerard," said the roly-poly Bert Bravo, smiling, minutes after Gerard had stepped out of the 18th green of Riviera. "Like Gerard, I own a wide body, too. And, like Gerard, I haven't quit playing golf."

You can say that again, Kabsat Bert.

Didn't John Daly, as stout and almost as heavy as Gerard Cantada, win both the PGA Championship and British Open?

Not the size, nor weight, but the swing—and heart.

* * *

FASTBREAK. My gratitude to Luke Pasiliao, Quinito Henson and that cable, pay-per-view wizard, Dennis Uy, for coming to the rescue regarding tickets I needed for The Zombies concert last night at the Araneta Coliseum, not to mention, of course, Steve O'Neal. Luke, a stalwart at Solar Sports & Entertainment, had tried hard also to supply me with tickets to the Andy Williams Show tonight and for which I am most thankful again... Also tonight, Richard Merk is putting up a great Valentine show at Merk's in Greenbelt 3 Makati. Cheers!

* * *

Comments to menju@pldtdsl.net

RP Marlboro team survives ordeal

TRUST YOURSELF.

That was the biggest lesson Symonette Lim, a 27-year-old computer programmer, learned when she joined the Philippine squad in the Marlboro Adventure Team odyssey in the forbidding desert expanse of Moab, Utah, recently.

Ten grueling days of extreme sports action under the searing sun pushed Lim to overcome obstacles she initially thought she could not hurdle.

Tough trail rides on motorcycles and quad bikes, rappelling, rowing and long treks were among the activities Lim and four other Filipinos, along with other adventure seekers from across the globe, had to complete in the 10th edition of the MAT in a non-competitive atmosphere.

"At first, I didn't really trust myself enough," said Lim. "I asked myself, '*Kaya ko ba 'to?' Baka mahulog ako sa bangin* (Am I up to this? I might fall in the ravine)."

It helped that fellow Filipino MAT participants John Valiente, Paqui Gonzales, Wesley Chiongbian and Reggie Casallos, as well as the marshals, were there to goad and back her up.

But it was the thought of completing the sometimes mind-boggling tasks that spurred her on.

Gonzales, Valiente, Lim, Chiongbian and Casallos stood out among some 33,000 Filipinos who vied for slots in the Philippine squad to the Moab odyssey and were rewarded with the adventure of a lifetime, courtesy of Philip Morris which shouldered all their expenses.

Philip Morris Phils. Manufacturing Inc. managing director Chris Nelson and Marlboro brand manager Eric Carandang said a new set of thrill seekers will be formed to savor the experience.

Lim is an outdoor adventure enthusiast, having conquered several mountains locally. "But MAT was a different scale," she said. "*Sobrang* great accomplishment. It was awesome."

Valiente said he and the rest of his teammates were happy to see Lim complete a tough ascent on huge rocks that most male participants had trouble climbing.

"She was on the verge of tears from the ordeal, but she didn't quit," said Valiente, in Filipino, who together with Lim was assigned to a team with other foreign participants. The three other Filipinos were dispersed to other squads.

Like the rest of her teammates, Lim said the fear and fatigue—aside from the icky feeling after several days without a shower—almost disappeared every time they took a breather to appreciate the picturesque and magnificent views of Moab and the surrounding National Parks reaching elevations of 6,000 feet.

"The environment helped heighten the experience," she said. "I learned that I could really talk to people, and that we had a lot in common with people from other countries. [It's a happy] adventure. It's sad it had to end."

FILIPINO computer programmer Symonette Lim pulls her backpack across a stream in Moab, Utah. Inset, riders negotiate a desert track.

BATANGAS MILO 21K

Desamito upsets favored Ballester

NECK-AND-NECK: Desamito (left) and Ballester with 5km to go.

BATANGAS CITY—VETERan Bernardo Desamito Jr. showed up former champion Allan Ballester to rule the 21K men's qualifying race of the 30th National Milo Marathon here Sunday.

Desamito and Ballester matched strides from the start but the 2000 and 2001 Milo Marathon winner suffered leg cramps with 1.5 kilometers to go, allowing the eventual regional champion to pull away.

The runner-up behind Rene Herrera in the 10K race of the Takbo Para Sa Kalikasan last week in Manila, Desamito finished Sunday's race in one hour, nine minutes and 48 seconds to pocket the P10,000 top purse.

He also towed into the national finals on Dec. 10 Ballester, who salvaged second in 1:10:13 and third placer Michael Canillo (1:11:13).

"I don't know why I suffered cramps because I'm in shape," said the 31-year-old Ballester, in Filipino. "But I promise to do well in the Finals."

Ballester, the 2003 Southeast Asian Games marathon champion, pocketed P6,000 while Canillo got P4,000.

Meanwhile, 19-year-old Maricel Maquilan topped the ladies' qualifying of this annual foot race held in partnership with Bayview Park Hotel-Manila, Cebu Pacific, Adidas and Powerbar.

Already the winner of the 5K Takbo Para Sa Kalikasan last Saturday, Maquilan completed the 21K course in 1:30:09 to capture her first leg title in the Milo Marathon and qualify to the final.

Maquilan, who is from Panay, will be competing for the first time in the Finals along with Liza Delfin and Perly Yambao. Delfin placed second in 1:30:38 while Yambao was third in 1:52:38.

Batangas City Mayor Eddie Dimacuha fired the gun that flagged off about 3,600 runners.

Topping the 5K fun run were Mark Reyes, Jerwin Bidbid and Dindo Ciabal (men) and Jinky Calusa, Christine Delfin and Melinda Dilla (women).

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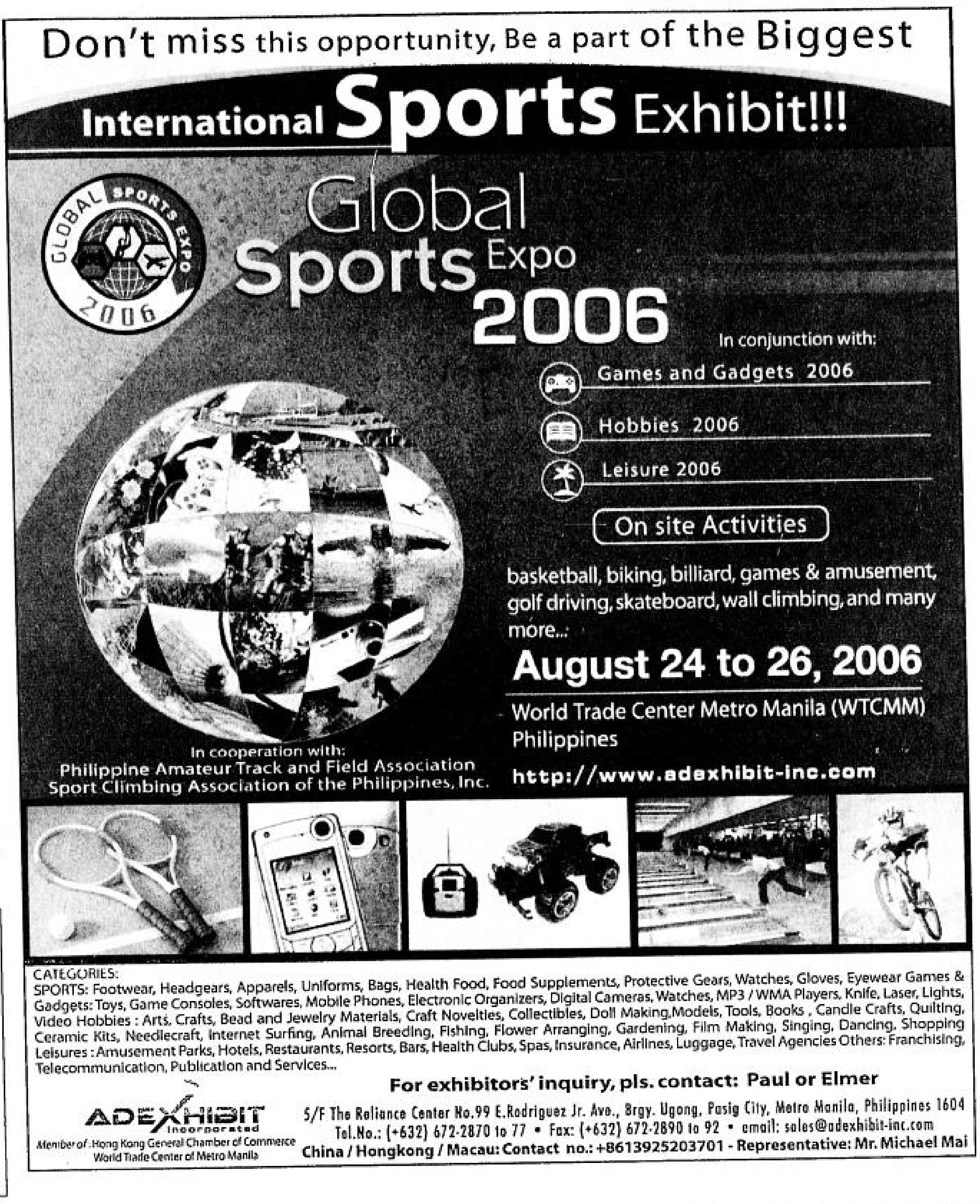
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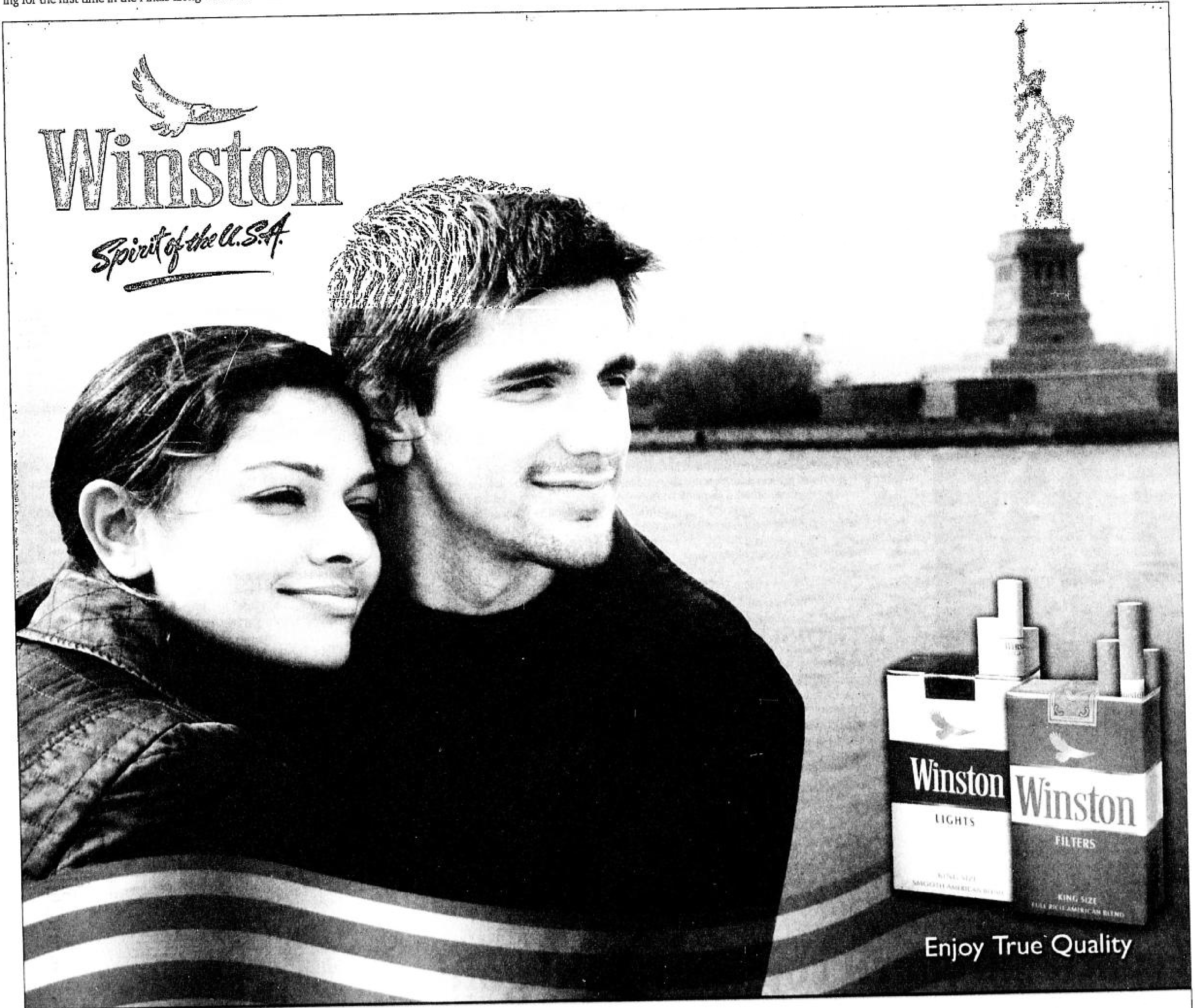

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Heat melt Pistons as Wade sizzles

WADE: Unstoppable in the fourth.

NEW YORK—DWYANE WADE SANK THE GAME-WINNING BASKET with 2.3 seconds left on the clock to give the Miami Heat a 100-98 win over the Detroit Pistons on Sunday.

Wade scored 37 points, including the Heat's last 17, as Miami rallied to beat the Pistons for the first time this season.

Wade finished 15-for-27 from the field and 7-for-9 from the foul line, hauling in eight rebounds and scoring 28 of his points in the second half.

"It was fun," Wade told reporters after the game.

"This win was important for our confidence. Any game where we're down, we can always look back to this game and know that we did it against a good team and can pull it out."

Shaquille O'Neal added 31 points for the Heat, with 21 of them coming in the first half. Detroit led 59-49 at the half.

The Pistons stretched that lead to 84-71 after three quarters, before Miami staged their biggest comeback of the season.

Miami finally tied the game at 98-98 on Wade's basket with 55 seconds left. Detroit then missed a pair of shots before the Heat got the ball back with 25 seconds left, setting the stage for Wade's game-winning 16-footer.

The Pistons had one last chance but Tayshaun Prince's 3-point attempt missed at the final buzzer.

Chauncey Billups scored 29 points and had 10 assists to lead Detroit, losers of three of their last five.

"Dwyane took the game over," Pistons coach Flip Saunders said. "He got a lot of shots up and we couldn't get any help over."

Richard Hamilton added 25 points for Detroit (41-9), while Rasheed Wallace scored 25 points.

Miami, which improved to 31-20, held the Pistons to just 14 points in the fourth quarter.

In Boston, Paul Pierce scored 31 points as the Celtics beat the Orlando Magic 102-94, while Manu Ginobli scored 29 points as the San Antonio Spurs beat the Indiana Pacers 92-88 in Indianapolis.

In Washington, Gilbert Arenas scored 27 points as the Wizards beat the Philadelphia 76ers 107-97 and the Raptors beat the Portland Trail Blazers 114-81 in Toronto.

In East Rutherford, Vince Carter scored 24 points as the New Jersey Nets beat the Milwaukee Bucks 94-79. *Reuters*

SOLAR SPORTS: 8 a.m.—San Antonio vs. Cleveland (replay at 8 p.m.)

CKS forges title clash with Xavier

CHIANG KAI SHEK COLLEGE BANKED ON Johar King to down St. Jude College, 80-68, and gain the second finals berth in the Metro Manila Tiong Lian Basketball Association (MMTLBA)-Hitachi Cup basketball championship at the UNO gym in Manila.

The 5-foot-11 King fired 29 points as Chiang Kai Shek forged a best-of-three title showdown with early finalist Xavier School. Game 1 is scheduled today.

Alexander Wong and Justin Shaun Chua, a 6-6 prized recruit from Bacolod City, added 23 points between them for Chiang Kai Shek of coach Sunny Co with team adviser Joel Yap.

Carl Cua finished with 28 points for St. Jude, which forced a sudden death match with a 61-58 win over Chiang Kia Shek last week.

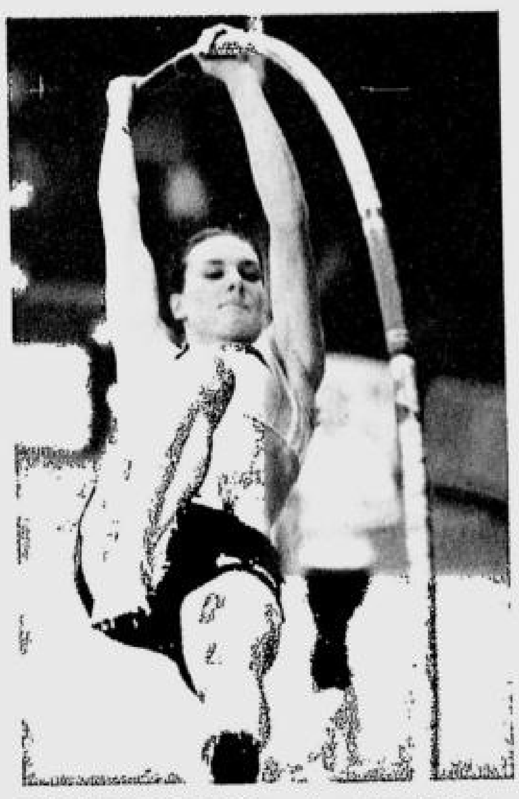
Xavier School earned the first finals berth by besting UNO High, 77-58, in the other crossover semis.

Leading the charge for the Patrick Aquino-mentored Xavier are 6-3 senior forward John Woodward Co and 5-9 guard Charles Justin.

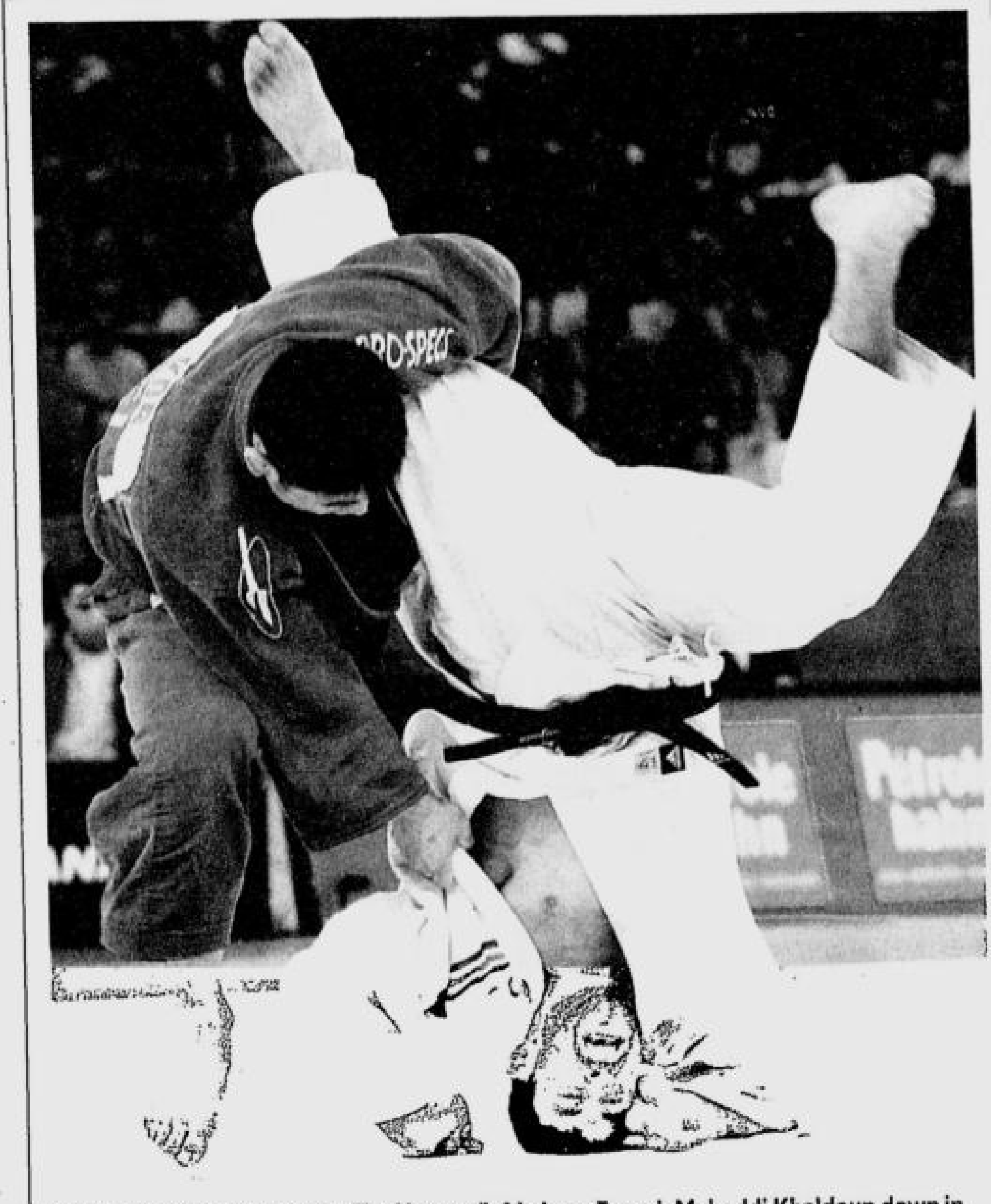
Nat'l Muaythai starts March 18

THE WORLD MUAYTHAI FEDERATION PHILIPpines (WMF-Phils) will be holding the 2006 National Muaythai Championship on March 4 at the Amoranto Sports Complex in Quezon City. The event is being held to select members of the Philippine Team that will compete in the 3rd World Muaythai championship set March 18-26 in Thailand.

Entries must be submitted to WMF-Phils offices at Unit 7-B, Vernida I Bldg., 120 Amorsolo St., Legaspi Vil., Makati City, tel/fax 02-8929176 and at JC-159 Beatriz Emporium, La Trinidad, Benguet, 074-4218361. cel: 0916-2289131, 0920-2927588. Email: wmf.phils@gmail.com.



WORLD RECORD: Olympic and world pole vault champion Yelena Isinbayeva of Russia sets a new world record in Donetsk, Ukraine, Feb. 1. Isinbayeva raised her own world record by a centimeter to 4.91 meters. REUTERS



TOP JUDOKA: Korean Hee-Tae Hwang (left) slams French Meheddi Khaldoun down in their under 90 kg category men's final at the Paris Judo tournament, Feb. 12 in the Palais Omnisports de Paris-Bercy. Hwang won the gold medal. AFP

Australia, US bets advance

LONDON—AUSTRALIAN NEWCOMER CHRIS Guccione steered his country to a 3-2 victory over Switzerland in their Davis Cup World Group first round tie on Sunday.

The 20-year-old, playing only his second Davis Cup tie, beat George Bastl in the fifth rubber to put the 28-times champions into the quarter-finals.

Australia, who were without former world number one Lleyton Hewitt, host Belarus in the last eight after they pulled off a shock 4-1 win over 2004 winners Spain in Minsk.

Belarus, along with holders Croatia, Argentina, Chile, France and Russia, had made sure of their progress after Saturday's doubles rubbers.

The United States joined them on Sunday when Andy Roddick eased past replacement Razvan Sabau to give his side a winning 3-1 lead over Romania in San Diego.

Former world number one Roddick, who vomited on court during his five-set defeat by Andrei Pavel on Friday, won 6-3 6-3 6-2 against the world number 112.

Sabau replaced Romanian number one Victor Hanescu, who was injured during Saturday's doubles rubber.

The United States will next host Chile, who have an unassailable 3-0 lead over last year's finalists Slovakia on the clay at Rancagua.

Australia's Guccione beat Bastl, 7-5 6-3 7-6, after Stanislas Wawrinka had kept the hosts, minus world number one Roger Federer, in the running with a win over Peter Luczak to level the score at 2-2. Quarterfinal ties take place from Apr. 7 to 9. *Reuters*

Oberholser makes breakthrough

PEBBLE BEACH, CALIFORNIA—A LUCKY break at the par-four 15th helped Arron Oberholser settle his fraying nerves and go on to secure a five-stroke victory at the Pebble Beach National Pro-Am on Sunday.

The 31-year-old American, his swing creaking under mounting pressure on the back nine at the Pebble Beach Golf Links, pushed his drive well right and watched as his ball bounced twice on a cart path before ending up to the left of a tree.

From there, with an opening to the green, he struck his second shot to seven feet and sank the birdie putt to restore his five-shot cushion over his closest challenger, South Africa's Rory Sabbatini.

Californian Oberholser parred the last three holes for a level-par 72 to win his maiden PGA Tour title at a course he has known since he was a teenager.

A former college student at the nearby San Jose State University, he came to Pebble Beach for the first time to watch the 1992 US Open with a friend.

"We watched the first round and saw (Jose Maria) Olazabal, (Fred) Couples and (Tom) Kite for a few holes," he recalled. "I remember that like it was yesterday.

Oberholser, a twice champion on the minor US Nationwide Tour who earned $1 million for his victory at the 2004 Shinhan Korea Golf Championship, believes he can now challenge the game's elite because of an improved mental approach. *Reuters*

SPORTSWATCH

Espiritu settles for 10th place in Langkawi

KUALA LUMPUR, MALAYSIA—HEAVY RAINS FORCED THE CANCELLATION OF Stage 10 of the TM Le Tour de Langkawi, enabling Pagcor-Casino Filipino rider Victor Espiritu to snatch 10th place in the Asian Rider Overall race at the close of the event Sunday here. The organizers and the race jury decided to abandon the 56-km criterium final stage after bad weather rendered the roads slippery and dangerous for the field. They instead used the standings at the end of Stage 9 as the final result. That enabled Espiritu to make it to Asia's Top 10 list after reclaiming the 10th spot during the individual time trial in Stage 9 in Melaka. His total time of 27:20.47 was some 21 minutes behind Asian champion Hossein Askari of Giant Asia. Down to just three men, the Pagcor-Casino Filipino Team, backed here by Philpost, Air21, Unilab, UCPB Gen., Vellum Cycles and the Philippine Sports Commission, placed sixth and last in the Asian Team Classification ruled by Japan.

Campomanes heads appeals jury

HONORARY WORLD CHESS FEDERATION (FIDE) PRESIDENT FLORENCIO CAMpomanes has been named head of the appeals jury in the 37th Chess Olympiad set May 19 to June 3 in Turin, Italy. In making Campomanes' appointment, Fide president Kirszan Ilyumzhinov has given extra significance to the Filipino's long years in world chess. The Turin Olympiad marks Campomanes' 50-year service to world chess, starting from the Philippines' first participation in Moscow. Campomanes became Asian zone president, Fide vice president and eventually head of the world chess body from 1982 to 1995.

NUSP, PSI launching reset

THE LAUNCHING OF THE NATIONAL UNIFIED SPORTS PROGRAM (NUSP) AND the putting into operation of the Philippine Sports Institute (PSI) at the Multi-Purpose Arena of Philsports in Pasig City is rescheduled on March 20-21, the Philippine Sports Commission (PSC) announced yesterday. "In light of the stampede in Philsports last Feb. 4 which left 74 people dead and hundreds injured, the PSC is observing a 40-day mourning period in the Filipino tradition of honoring the dead," chair William Ramirez said. The occasion was originally scheduled on Feb 16-17.

Matula Fairview tennis club prexy

BUSINESSMAN MAT MATULA WAS ELECTED PRESIDENT OF THE SSS NORTH Fairview Tennis Club during its recent general assembly. Other officers elected were Tony Marcelino, vice president; Eddie Galvez, secretary; Dr. Noel Bercero, treasurer; Tiboy Cruz, auditor; and Danny de los Santos, Nikko Balbuena, Rolly Mabalot, Jess Fernandez, Ely Depalco and Dr. Vicente Curimao, directors. The new officers will be sworn in by former Quezon City Rep. Chuck Mathay on Feb. 18.

AIM President's Cup Feb. 18

THE ASIAN INSTITUTE OF MANAGEMENT (AIM) ALUMNI ASSOCIATION-PHILIPpine Chapter and the Kelab AIM Malaysia will be hosting the AIM President's Cup 2006, on Feb. 18 at the Perangsang Templer Golf Club, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. The event is part of a three-day affair that would bring together AIM alumni from all over the globe. This event will start on Feb. 16 and is open to both golfers and non-golfers. For details, call (632) 892.4011 locals 2103, 2105, 340 or 331.

CAGE CHAMPS: Imus Pilot-Cavite's Jerome Cananay with his 12-under teammates after capturing the Cherifer Tangkad Sagad Basketball Tournament over the weekend at the San Beda-Alabang gym. Also shown are Imus Pilot coaches Arnulfo Nepomuceno and Ronnie Yoahn with Cherifer product manager Tom Meneses, tournament director Edmundo Badolato and organizer Bernard Ocampo.

Tropang Rizal Cockers fellowship

THE TROPANG RIZAL COCKERS WILL HOLD A FELLOWSHIP AFFAIR ON FEB. 18 at the Chowking Restaurant in Tikling, Taytay. Gamefowl industry leader Thunderbird Power Feeds will host the event as well as a free seminar on breeding and cockfighting. Attendees need only to present five empty packs of any Thunderbird products. Industry experts will discuss gamefowl raising, conditioning and pointing. Meanwhile, the United Cockers Club based at the Texas Cockpit in Antipolo City has announced their derby schedule for 2006. The first leg will be on Feb. 28.

BY TOP CHOICE

Race 1—(Qrt/Tri)—Smart Harry (2), Special Lad (5), Action Mark (1), Feng Shui (6)
Race 2—(Penta/Tri)—Hezabellagio (7), Virgin Island (3), Time Enchanted (2), Magical Surf (10), Courage Heart (6)
Race 3—(Qrt/Tri)—Michevious (7), Scarlet Skyterror (6), Real Precious (3), D'Venetian (1)
Race 4—(Penta/Tri)—She Boom (7), Vhinggel (3), Mister Cool (9), Ingay Ingay (1), Snow Princess (5)
Race 5—(Qrt/Tri)—Mucho Man (7), Sun Coast (8), Real Magic (1), Alias Abrakadabra (2)
Race 6—(Penta/Tri)—Road Runner (8), Guided Missile (2), Loaded (7), Red Phoenix (3), mary Jane Bomb (9)
Race 7—(Qrt/Tri)—Ovature (2), Black Widow (7), Don King (1), Fernan Ikaw Pa Rin (4)
Race 8—(Super 6/Qrt/Tri)—Take A Strike (11), Jazz In Time (6), Strong Jays (7), King Aljhun (3), Besame Mucho (10), Terminator (9)

WINTER OLYMPICS

French daredevil cops downhill gold

TURIN—CHAMPAGNE FLOWED in the Italian Alps on Sunday after French daredevil courage drove Antoine Deneriaz to downhill gold at the Winter Olympics and Italy won its first gold medal.

Armin Zoeggeler was the toast of the town when he gave the hosts victory in the singles luge but the bubbly was no longer on ice for American figure skater Michelle Kwan.

Instead, she was left weeping and numb after injury robbed her of a chance of gold.

In the men's cross-country skiing 30-km pursuit in Pragelato, Norway's Frode Estil had to settle for silver but stole the limelight from Russian winner Eugeni Dementiev after an extraordinary fightback.

He fell at the start of the race, took several skiers to the ground with him and lost one of his skis. But from 77th, he carved through the field and gave Dementiev a run for his money before losing out for gold.

At the same venue, Estonia's Kristina Smigun celebrated a complete change of mindset, style and support team with a gold medal in the women's cross-country 15-km pursuit.

The American "flying tomato," red-headed Shaun White, spun gold in the snowboarding half-pipe and 19-year-old Dutch speed-skater Ireen Wust skated the race of her life to win the women's 3,000 meters.

But it was misery for American Apolo Anton Ohno who slid out of the men's 1,500 meter semi-finals and into a lowly ninth place.

The gold was won by three-times world champion Ahn Hyun-soo, of South Korea.

Ticket sales have met a budget target of 64 million euros three days after the Games officially opened. organizers said. *Reuters*

PowerBar
speedo

SECOND PLACERS: PSC Commissioner Joey Mundo congratulates the team of St. Scholastica-Westgrove/Don Bosco composed of Therese Marie Santos, Luis Antonio Baranagan and Andrea Marie Santos for placing second in the inter-school sprint distance competition of the Lakeshore-National Triathlon Championship in Mexico, Pampanga. Lakeshore chair/CEO architect Nestor Manglo awaits his turn.

Cowboys in the closet

By Oliver M. Pulumbarit
Contributor

FOR GAY PEOPLE WHO FEEL UNDER-REPresented in mainstream cinema, "Brokeback Mountain" just might usher in a more queer-visible age. The film's successes—from being a critic and audience favorite to multiple Oscar nominations—have underscored the strengths of the gay cowboy movie, and it won't be long until the rest of Hollywood jumps on the bandwagon. While not a revolutionary enterprise, the film brings an aptly courageous endeavor to life, dissecting a still-touchy subject with heartfelt performances from its mostly young cast.

Versatile Ang Lee is apropos for it, as the filmmaker has sensitively tackled homosexuality before, in the 1993 drama "The Wedding Banquet." Part of his visual style is characterized by lingering establishing shots—it may seem that the first 20 minutes are devoted to stock shots of massive mountains and flocks of sheep walking endlessly—but he also focuses on the mostly non-verbal exchange between two hunky cowboys in love. Ennis Del Mar (Heath Ledger) and Jack Twist (Jake Gyllenhaal), co-workers in a Wyoming ranch in the early 1960s, discover and explore their sexuality on the escapist terrains of Brokeback Mountain.

Escape

Overall, the movie reflects the real-life pathos of gay men forced to stay in the closet by finger-wagging homophobes. The lovers, like many gay people we know, try to move on by marrying their girlfriends, spiritedly and memorably played by Michelle Williams and Anne Hathaway. As "fishing buddies," however, Ennis and Jack escape their unhappy family lives from time to time.

JAKE and Heath Ledger: A sad and beautiful tale

As with many supposedly forbidden romances, their secret union can only end in tears. And weep with them, we do. Ledger, Gyllenhaal, Williams and Hathaway, who, not too long ago, all starred in some generic teen-geared movies or soaps, show more substance and depth (not to mention, skin) with these more mature roles. This career-shaping turning point illustrates their range, as each of them surges with passion, longing, disappointment and, in Ennis' case, self-loathing.

Ledger truthfully and very capably plays a role that even some Hollywood A-listers may find daunting. While his faux accent squelched up some lines, and his subdued old-guy makeup isn't that convincing in later scenes, we believe him, nonetheless, and share in his quiet moments of honest emotion. "Brokeback" is rife with them, making us welcome voyeurs to a sad but beautiful tale of repression and rebellion.

> Their secret can only end in tears—and we weep with them

Will 'Brokeback' break SM ban?

By Bayani San Diego Jr.

THE QUESTION WAS FIRST POSED BY FILMmaker Mel Chionglo, former member of the Movie and Television Review and Classification Board (MTRCB), now member of the Cinema committee of the National Commission for Culture and the Arts: "Will Oscars frontrunner 'Brokeback Mountain' serve as the test case for SM's R-18 ban?"

According to Macie Imperial, director for film acquisitions and marketing of Skyfilms (local distributor of "Brokeback"), the Ang Lee film was rated R-18 and approved without cuts by the MTRCB.

"That means we cannot have a run in SM cinemas, though," Imperial told INQUIRER Entertainment. "In any case, it will be shown in Rockwell, Robinsons, Gateway, Eastwood, Blue Wave and all the Ayala malls."

Ric Camaligan, first vice president of SM Leisure Inc. (which operates SM Cinemas), said R-18 movies could always appeal with the MTRCB.

Imperial said they had no intention of doing that. "We're quite happy with the present rating. If we reapply for an R-13, the MTRCB might ask us to cut certain controversial scenes, which we feel are essential to the development of the love story."

Camaligan said SM would lift its R-18 ban only "if that film becomes a box-office hit." He insisted that "the failure of adult movies to attract a large audience" was the only reason behind the policy.

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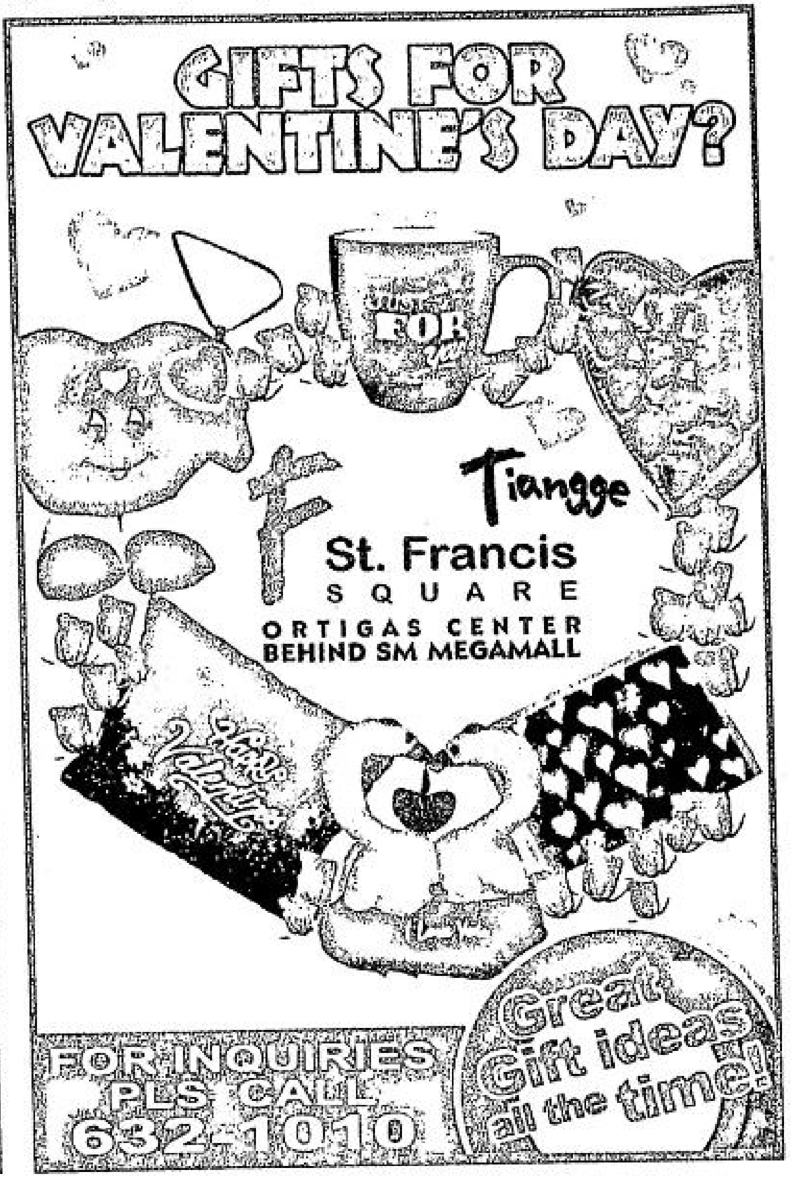
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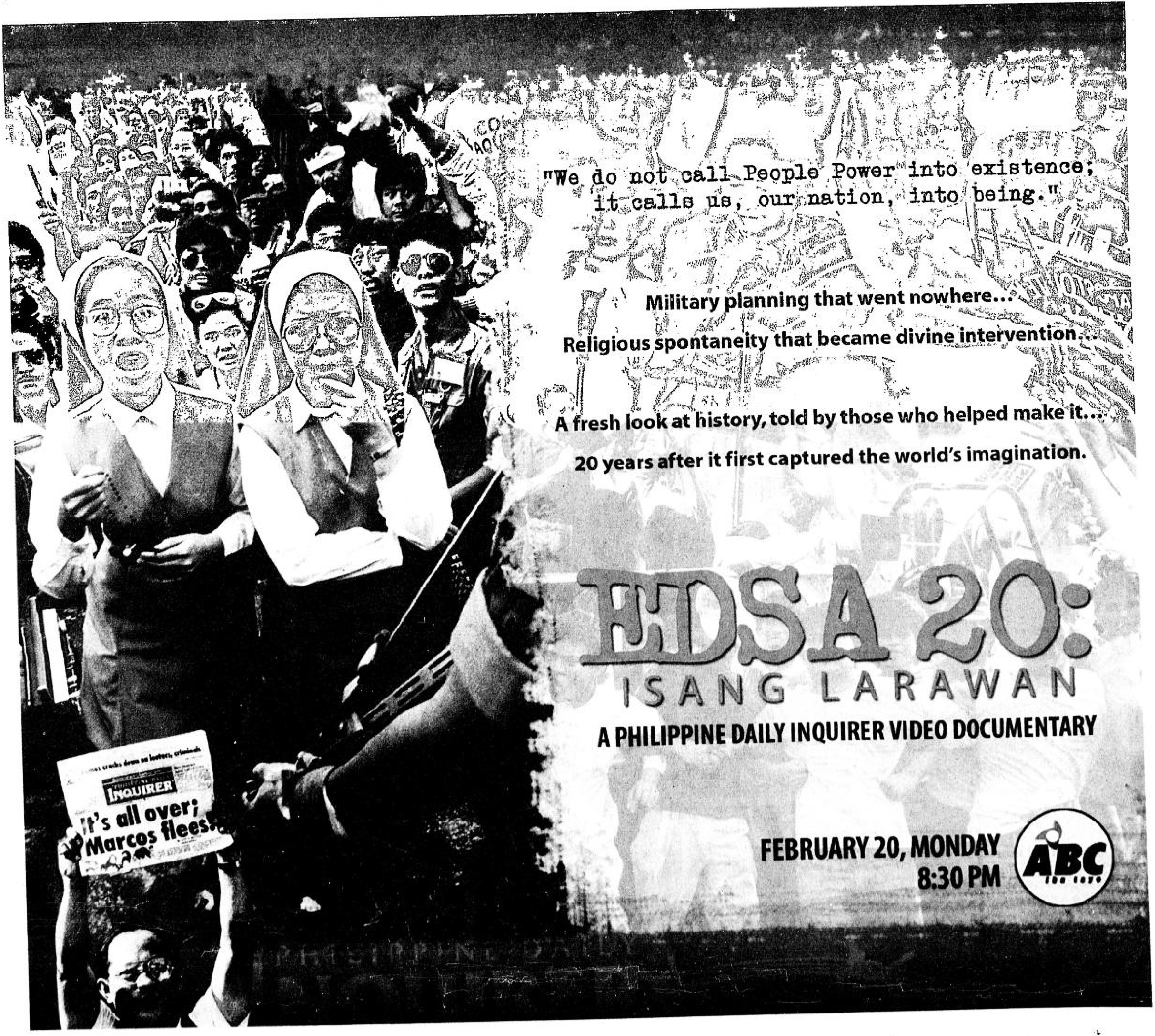
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(ALABANG) tel. 8504285, 6433994
1 TUKSO
2 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU
3 FUN W/ DICK & JANE
4 BLOODRAYNE

Center Mall Cinema
Baguio Center Mall, Magsaysay Avenue
(Baguio City) tel (074)- (4449346)
1 FUN W/ DICK & JANE
2 DUNGEON THE DRAGON

Lianas Cinema
(Pasig) tel 640.4748
1 THE MAN
2 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU

THEATRES
NE Pacific Mall Cabanatuan,
Telephone No. (044) 600-3025
1 DERAILED
2 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU
3 RUMOR HAS IT

Jade Cinema
(Angeles City) tel (045) 887.5001 to 03
1 (DOLBY EX) I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU
2 FUN W/ DICK & JANE
3 (DTS EX) FIREWALL
4 SAW-2

Lianas Cinema
(Alabang) tel 850.1276
1 (SDDS) CHEAPER BY THE DOZEN-2
2 TUKSO
3 PAKAWALANG PUSO
4 (DTS) DOOM

Lianas MovieCity
(Calamba) tel (049) 545.7202
1 (DOLBY) FUN W/ DICK & JANE
2 TUKSO
3 (DTS) FIREWALL
4 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU
5 UNDERWORLD-2

Cine Nepo
(Angeles City) tel (045) 887.0121
1 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU
2 FIREWALL
3 (DOLBY) RESERVED
4 (DTS) RESERVED

PACIFIC MALL LUCENA CINEMAGIC
Pacific Mall Lucena Tel (042) 660-6271
1 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU
2 FUN W/ DICK & JANE
3 RESERVED
4 RESERVED

Cine Nepo
(Dagupan City) tel (075) 515.8409
1 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU
2 ZATHURA
3 (DOLBY) THE MAID
4 (DTS) RUMOR HAS IT

Fiesta World Mall
(Lipa) tel (043) 981.0790
1 LOLLIPOP & ROSES
2 FUN W/ DICK & JANE
3 THE MAID
4 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU

Centre Plaza Cinema
(Balanga, Bataan) tel (047) 237.7007
1 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU
2 KING KONG

Berma Cinema
(Baclaran) tel 879.2030 / 879.2029
1 TUKSO
2 SAW-2

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VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre

THE "CELEBRITIES" COMPETING IN THE NEW edition of "Pinoy Big Brother" turn out to be not as popular as expected.

But they're an engagingly varied lot—from now gaunt **Rustom Padilla** to now plump **Aleck Bovick**; from hunks **Christian Vasquez** and **Zanjoe Marado** to one-legged **Rudy Fernandez** and singer-comic **Budoy Miravilles**; from classy **Bianca Gonzales** to *palaban* **Keanna Reeves**—etc.

They're definitely more interesting than the unknowns who made up the first batch of "PBB" "housemates," so time passes faster as we watch the show's current edition.

We also like the reality challenge's "back to basics" style, because it forces the "celebrities" to live much more simply than they're used to. And the pared-down lifestyle could pressure some of them to reveal aspects of themselves that they've heretofore kept from view.

That could lead to realizations that would expand viewers' understanding of what "celebrity" really is—and isn't.

The inclusion of people from different parts of the country could also enrich viewers' appreciation of our range of diverse regional characteristics, which could help explain why we have such a hard time getting our act together as a people.

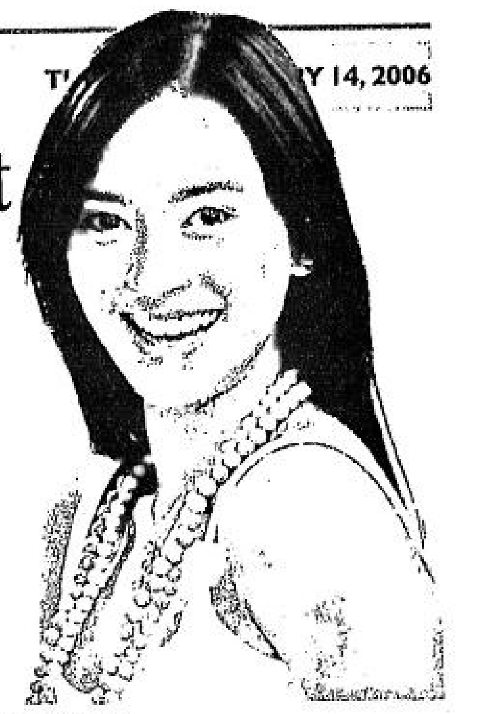
And living for two months with one-legged Rudy should add a lot to the housemates' understanding of other disabled people—with the show's viewers learning along with them.

However, the show has gotten off to a shaky start, choosing to focus instead on teapot tempests involving some of the housemates, incipient crushes here and there, a little flirtation, and emotional outburts as some celebrities miss their loved ones.

The show can be much more than this, so we're a bit impatient to see it find its proper pace.

We also sense that some celebrity housemates are pacing themselves in terms of full participation in the program's activities. The instinctive rule appears to be: the more popular you are, the more you hedge your bets for the moment, to avoid overexposure and peaking too early.

KEANNA: *Palaban*



BIANCA: Classy

This makes sense, because two months is a long time, and early favorites could end up biting the dust much too soon. So, the real celebrities in the batch are benefiting from the experience that all their years in show biz have given them.

That could be why the more veteran likes of Rustom, **John Prats** and Christian haven't really made their mark on the show to date, while relative newbies like Budoy, Keanna and Mich Dulce are all over the place, talking a blue streak and "entertaining" anyone in sight.

As for the crybabies who keep weeping themselves a river, they ought to realize that viewers don't sympathize with them—because they knew all along that they were in for the long haul, right? So all those tears during the very first week of the program come off as both immature and self-serving.

'Hearts in Season'

TOGETHER for the first time, '80s divas **Janet Basco**, **Ivy Violan** and **Dulce** perform in the Valentine concert, "Hearts in Season," at the Manila Peninsula Rigodon Ballroom. Call 776-9359 or 0917-9011333.

With more than 20 years of performing, all three divas are multi-awarded in the field of live entertainment.

Directed by **Toti Fuentes**, the Valentine show will also feature painter-singer **George Tagle** and musical theater performer **Miguel Castro**.

'American Idol'

THE FIFTH season of "American Idol" is telecast live on Star World every Wednesday and Thursday at 6 p.m., with replays at 8 p.m. and 11:30 p.m.

Amadis' travel book

"The Archipelago Sanctuaries," the latest travel book by **Amadis' Ma.Guerrero**, was well-received at its launch at Rizal Towers, Rockwell Center, recently.

It is now available at National Bookstore, Powerbooks and other outlets. The book's being distributed by Anvil Publishing.

Hilera signs EMI contract

AFTER OUTPERFORMING eight other bands from top schools, Hilera, a trio from Kalayaan College, topped the Nescafe Soundskook inter-collegiate band competition.

Last Feb. 8, the group signed a contract with EMI Music.

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CINEMA 4 FEARLESS - SNEAK PREVIEWS 11:00,1:15,3:30, 5:45,8:00,10:20 PG13
CINEMA 5 FIREWALL 11:40 , 2:20 ,5:00, 7:40 , 10:20 PG13
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MUSIC MUSEUM

FEBRUARY 10,11 &13	VINA M., RACHEL A. & GENEVA C.	8:30PM
February 15, 2006	CANDY PANGILINAN	8:00PM

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FEBRUARY 13 & 14	JAZZ YOU , JAZZ ME ISABELLA & RICHARD MERCK	9PM

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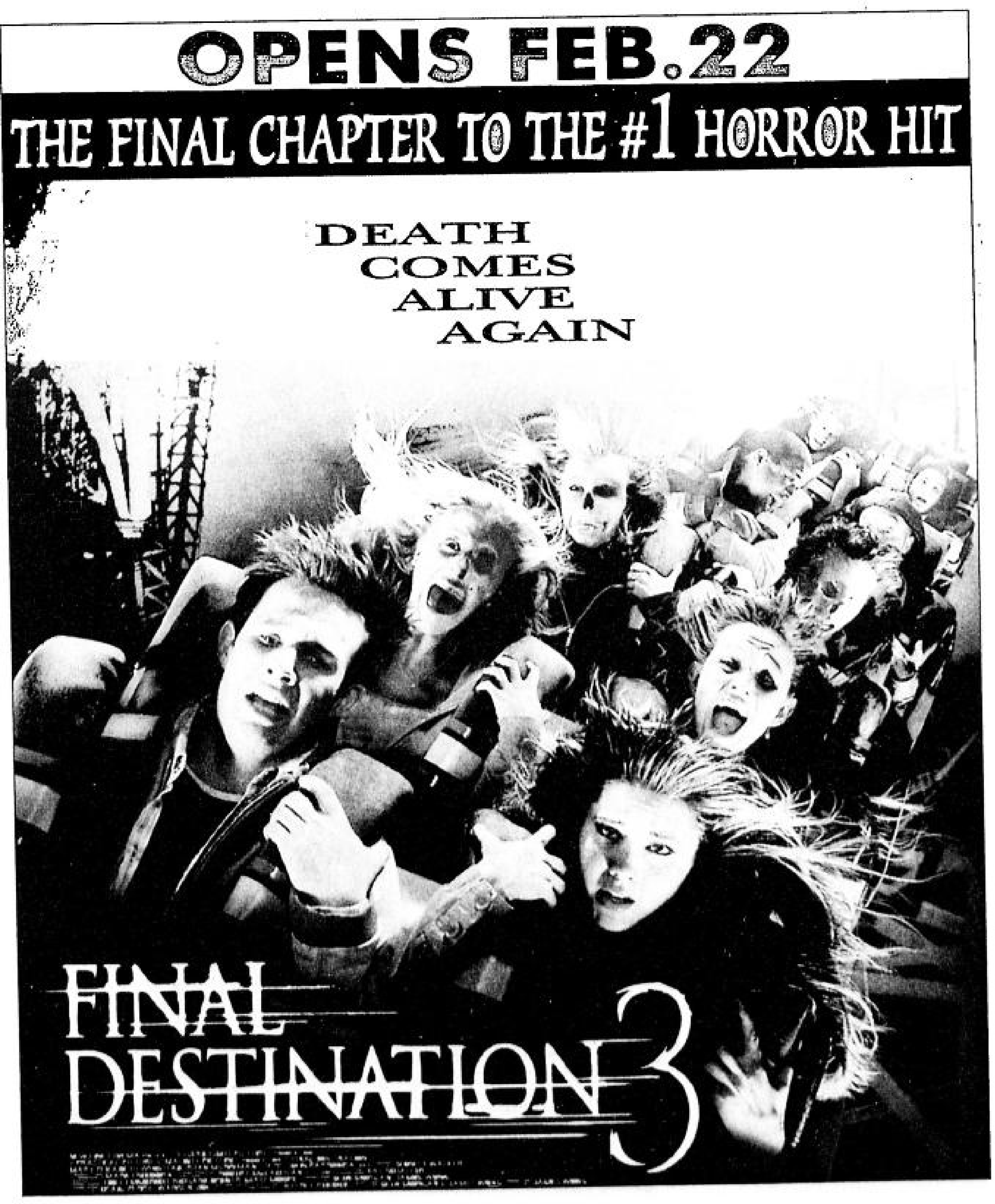
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FINAL DESTINATION 3

KALAPANA

DALE Ibay

Speaking of surprises

By Pocholo Concepcion
Contributor

SPIN CITY

FINDING HOPE

It's not easy to like Dale Ibay. That is, if your idea of good music is bounded by what you always want to hear, and not what you need to get into, for a change.

On first hearing, Ibay's debut CD "Carpe Diem ... Someday" (Vicor) sounds unusually wordy, like a songwriter overeager to demonstrate his prowess. For one thing, it seems like he's out of synch with certain turns of phrase that should've been edited or revised because they somehow don't fit. Noticeably, most of Ibay's lyrics seldom rhyme.

But it turns out Ibay has so much to say for the depressed, destitute or downtrodden.

In his songs, Ibay ruminates, argues and generally talks at length about finding hope in desperation, opportunity in crisis, and truth beneath the lies people go through every day of their lives. And yet he's not preachy.

In the title track (the Latin expression of "seize the day"), the speaker dreams of becoming "better man" but is stuck in procrastination. The implicit message is not something like, "go ahead and do it, for Christ sakes," but rather "okay then, so what are you gonna do about it?"

Other insights are explicitly laid out among what appears to be prosaic tunes, but the point here really is to listen and hear the sensible reflections of a young man who thinks he can help others help themselves.

Strange yet familiar

Like Ibay, it's not easy to like Noli Aurillo. That is, if your idea of a good musician is someone who plays all the right riffs and licks at the most appropriate moment.

Aurillo is known in the local rock scene as a genius, in the sense that he plays guitar in a refreshingly inventive manner and coaxes the most wonderful sounding notes at the most unexpected time.

Since the late '80s, he has gained notice as an exciting session guitarist for the likes of Cocojam, Joey "Pepe" Smith and dozens of other similarly idiosyncratic artists both on stage and in the recording studio.

But this year, the greatest surprise is that Aurillo is finally coming out with his own recorded output. And my, how very Noli indeed, because he said the album will comprise four CDs, sort of an anthology of the songs he has written all these years.

A six-song sampler titled "Meanderings" takes the listener on a strange yet familiar terrain where the aural landscape blooms with snatches of folk, rock, jazz, classical and whatnot, featuring a number of contemporary and veteran musicians in the mix—including, lo and behold, Aurillo himself on vocals!

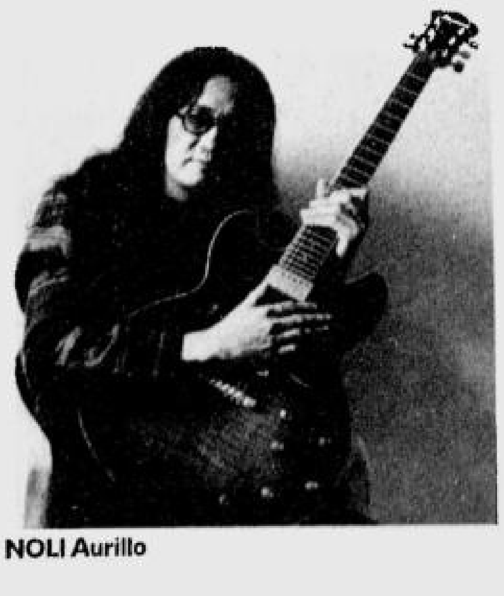
Pleasant experience

Speaking of surprises from veteran musicians, the forthcoming gig of the Hawaiian band Kalapana should offer local fans something more than the usual songs we have known like "The Hurt," "What Do I Do" and "Night Bird."

Night owls surely remember these tunes being covered to death by local bands like Side A, but it would be a pleasant experience to rediscover that the self-titled Kalapana album, where those three aforementioned tracks are found, actually contain eight other beautiful cuts.

Foremost of which are "When the Morning Comes," "Kona Daze," "Naturally" and "You Make It Hard"—whose themes of romance and love of nature capture the easygoing vibes that make Hawaiian beaches and mountains a favored destination apart from our very own Boracay.

But according to its members, Kalapana has recorded some 30 albums since that classic outing. It would be interesting to hear how the other songs sound like—considering that the bandleader describes the classic as lightweight material.



NOLI Aurillo

POWER PLANT
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Rockwell Center, Makati City ☎ Tel. No: 8981440-41 DOLBY DIGITAL SURROUND-EX

MUNICH R13 12:30,3:40,6:50,10:00	DERAILED R13 1:10,3:30	FUN WITH DICK AND JANE PG13 1:35,3:45,5:55, 8:05,10:15
FEARLESS PG13 1:45,3:55,6:05, 8:15,10:25	NEW WORLD PG13 1:20,4:20,7:20,10:20	FIRE WALL PG13 12:15,2:45,5:15, 7:45,10:15

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1	FUN WITH DICK & JANE 1:40, 4:00, 6:20, 8:40, 11:00 PG-13
2	FIREWALL 1:05, 3:35, 6:05, 8:35, 11:00 PG-13
3	MUNICH 1:05, 4:20, 7:40, 10:50 R-13
4	NEW WORLD 11:55, 2:45, 5:35, 8:25, 11:00 PG-13

SHANG CINEPLEX
① FUN WITH DICK AND JANE
MTRCB PG-13
12:40, 3.00, 5:20, 7:40, 10:00
② FIREWALL
MTRCB PG-13
12 00 2 30 5 00 7 30 10 00
③ MUNICH
MTRCB . R-13
11 15, 2:20, 5.25, 9:00
④ FEARLESS
MTRCB PG-13
12.00, 2:30, 5.00, 7:30, 10:00
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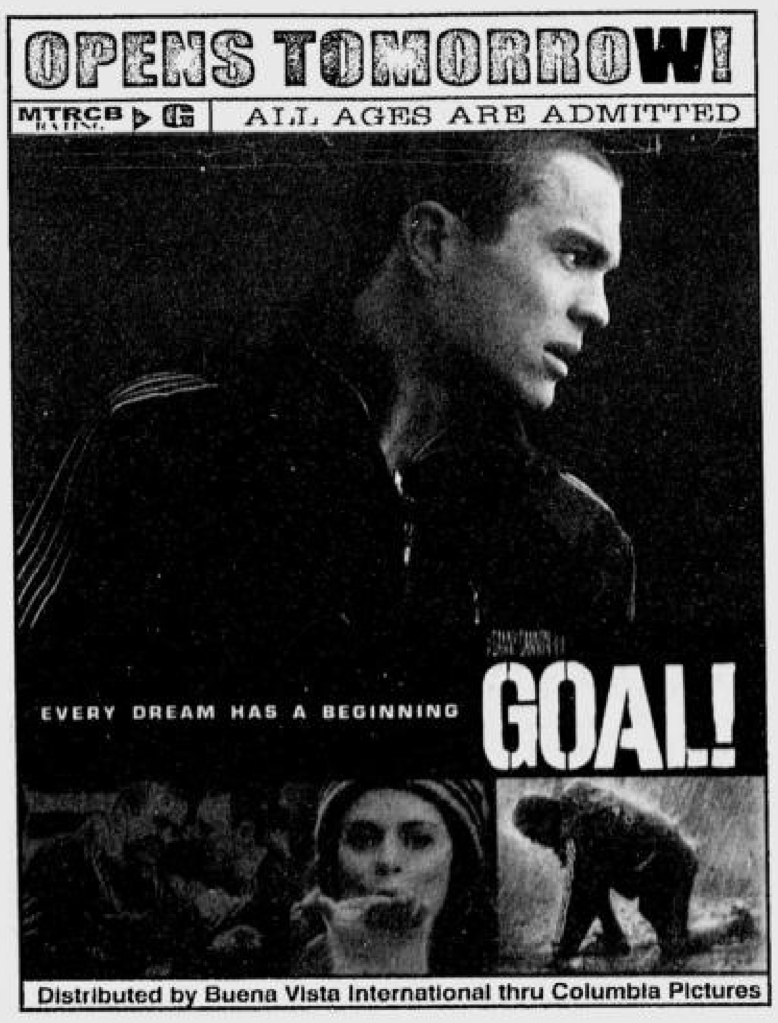
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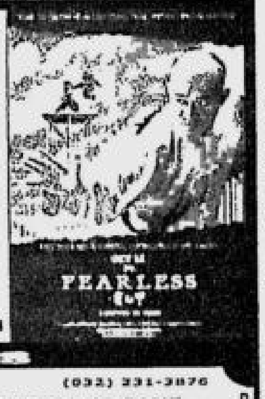

GUARANTEED SEATS
THE PODIUM 633-8976
1 FUN WITH DICK AND JANE
02 00 FS / 02.25 MF /04.35 / 06:45
08:20 LFS / 09:00 LMF / 10:35 END
2 FIREWALL
01:40FS / 02:10 MF / 04:25 / 06:40
08:25 LFS / 09:00 LMF / 10:45 END
MEGAMALL
1 FEARLESS
CEBU (032) 231-3876
1 FUN WITH DICK AND JANE
11:20 FS / 11:30 MF / 01 30 / 03:30 / 05:30 / 07:30
09:05 LFS / 09:30 LMF / 11:05 END
2 FIREWALL
11:50 FS / 11:10 MF / 01 14 / 03:18 / 05:22 / 07:26
09:18 LFS / 09:30 LMF / 11:25 END
3 DERAILED
12:00 FS / 12:18 MF / 02 36 / 04:54 / 07:12
09 03 LFS 09 30 LMF / 11 20 END
movietime

METRO MANILA

SM MEGAMALL
1 FEARLESS
2 FIREWALL
3 BLOODRAYNE
4 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU
5 FUN WITH DICK AND JANE
6 FEBRUARY LOVEFEST 2006
7 SAW 2
8 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU
9 NEW WORLD
10 UNDERWORLD 2
11 DERAILED
12 MUNICH

SM CITY STA. MESA
1 FEARLESS
2 FIREWALL
3 NEW WORLD
4 FUN WITH DICK AND JANE
5 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU
6 SAW 2
7 UNDERWORLD 2
8 MUNICH
9 BLOODRAYNE
10 DON'T GIVE UP ON US

SM CITY BICUTAN
1 FIREWALL
2 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU
3 FUN WITH DICK AND JANE
4 NEW WORLD

SM SUPERCENTER VALENZUELA
1 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU
2 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU
3 FIREWALL
4 FUN WITH DICK AND JANE

SM CITY FAIRVIEW
1 MUNICH
2 BLOODRAYNE
3 SAW 2
4 FIREWALL
5 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU
5 FEBRUARY LOVEFEST 2006
7 NEW WORLD
8 FUN WITH DICK AND JANE
9 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU
10 UNDERWORLD 2
11 BLOODRAYNE
12 FEARLESS

SM CITY SOUTHMALL
1 FEBRUARY LOVEFEST 2006
2 FIREWALL
3 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU
4 FEARLESS
5 NEW WORLD
6 SAW 2
7 FUN WITH DICK AND JANE
8 UNDERWORLD 2
9 MUNICH
10 RESERVED

SM SUPERCENTER SUCAT
1 NEW WORLD
2 FIREWALL
3 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU
4 FUN WITH DICK AND JANE

SM CITY NORTH EDSA
1 FEARLESS
2 MUNICH
3 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU
4 FUN WITH DICK AND JANE
5 UNDERWORLD 2
6 BLOODRAYNE
7 FIREWALL
8 NEW WORLD

SM CITY MANILA
1 MUNICH
2 BLOODRAYNE
3 FIREWALL
4 NEW WORLD
5 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU
6 FEARLESS
7 FEBRUARY LOVEFEST 2006
8 ZATHURA
9 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU
10 FUN WITH DICK AND JANE
11 UNDERWORLD 2
12 SAW 2

SM CITY SAN LAZARO
1 FEARLESS
2 FEBRUARY LOVEFEST 2006
3 FUN WITH DICK AND JANE
4 FIREWALL
5 NEW WORLD
5 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU

LUZON

SM CITY PAMPANGA
1 FIREWALL
2 FUN WITH DICK AND JANE
3 UNDERWORLD 2
4 SAW 2
5 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU
6 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU

SM CITY BAGUIO
1 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU
2 FUN WITH DICK AND JANE
3 LITTLE MANHATTAN
4 UNDERWORLD 2

SM SUPERCENTER MOLINO
1 BLOODRAYNE
2 FUN WITH DICK AND JANE
3 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU
4 FIREWALL

SM CITY BACOOR
1 UNDERWORLD 2
2 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU
3 FEARLESS
4 NEW WORLD
5 FIREWALL
6 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU
7 FUN WITH DICK AND JANE
8 FEBRUARY LOVEFEST 2006

SM CITY MARILAO
1 SAW 2
2 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU
3 UNDERWORLD 2
4 FUN WITH DICK AND JANE

SM CITY DASMARINAS
1 BLOODRAYNE
2 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU
3 FUN WITH DICK AND JANE
4 FIREWALL

SM CITY LUCENA
1 ZATHURA
2 FUN WITH DICK AND JANE
3 RUMOR HAS IT
4 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU

SM CITY BATANGAS
1 SAW 2
2 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU
3 FUN WITH DICK AND JANE
4 LITTLE MANHATTAN

VISAYAS AND MINDANAO

SM CITY CEBU
1 FUN WITH DICK AND JANE
2 FIREWALL
3 DERAILED
4 DOMINO
5 DON'T GIVE UP ON US
6 SAW 2
7 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU
8 UNDERWORLD 2

SM CITY ILOILO
1 LITTLE MANHATTAN
2 RESERVED
3 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU
4 ZATHURA
5 UNDERWORLD 2
5 FUN WITH DICK AND JANE
7 RESERVED
8 THE MAID

SM CITY DAVAO
1 FUN WITH DICK AND JANE
2 ZATHURA
3 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU
4 THE MAID
5 RUMOR HAS IT
5 UNDERWORLD 2

SM CITY CAGAYAN DE ORO
1 FUN WITH DICK AND JANE
2 DERAILED
3 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU
4 THE MAID

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A day of love and music all over the metro

KALAPANA, THE HAWAII-BASED BAND that popularized the now classic hits "The Hurt," "Nightbird," "Real Thing," "Juliette," "Naturally," and "For You I'd Be Chasing Rainbows" star in "Kalapana In Paradise," tonight at the PICC Plenary Hall.

Now in Manila—the first performance was last night—are the band's original members Gaylord Holomalia (band leader), DJ Pratt, Malani Bilyeu and Kenji Sano, with additional members Lindsay Zanuck Kapala, Manoha Garin Poliah and Paolo Tatsuo.

Call 891-9999 or 871-7577.

ELLA May Saison

Tonight

- Megastar Events presents **Ella May Saison**, in "Souls of Love" at **Bagaberde**, CCP Complex, Roxas Boulevard. Guests are Toy Symphony with Leo Aragon. Call 435-3967, (0926) 415-6853, or (0915) 541-9666.
- "Hearts in Season" with **Janet Basco, Ivy Violan, Dulce** and **Miguel Castro** at the **Manila Peninsula Rigodon Ballroom**
- **OJ Mariano** and **Czarina Rosales** at Suburbia
- **9th Avenue** at **Virgin Café**
- **Aiai de las Alas** in "Ai-shteru" (Ai-lab-u) at **Klownz Araneta**
- "Betcha By Golly Love" with **Aretha** and the **Souled Out Band** at **Merk's Bar Bistro**
- **The CompanY** at **19 East Music Hall** along South Super Highway, Sucat, Parañaque
- **The Tiongco Brothers** and **Marri Nallos** at **The Frontpage Piano Bar** at T.M. Kalaw St., Manila. Call 523-3367.
- **RJ and Friends** at **Camp Aguinaldo Theater** for a fund-raising concert for Pasay City Streetchildren; 8 p.m. Call 899-3108
- **Suzy Unas** at Manila Pavilion **Boulvar Lounge**
- **Groovewerk** at **Tavern on the Square**, Greenbelt 3
- **Jed Madela** at **Sitcom Live!** in Las Piñas

KYLA

SHOW TIME

KALAPANA

Tomorrow

- **Kalapana** at the **PICC**. Call 891-9999 and 871-7577
- **Andy Williams** Live! at the **Araneta Coliseum**
- **Rico J. Puno** at the **Manila Hotel** with guests **K Brosas** and **Danita Paner**
- **Rannie Raymundo, Tessa Garcia** and the **Philharmonic Orchestra** at the **Hotel Philippine Plaza**
- **Janno Gibbs** and **Gladys Guevarra** at **Zirkoh** in "Lintik na Pag-Ibig"
- "Betcha By Golly Love" with **Aretha** and the **Souled Out Band** at **Merk's Bar Bistro**
- **DK Tijam** at **Suburbia**
- **Freeway** at **Virgin Café**
- **Aiai de las Alas** in "Ai-shteru" (Ai-lab-u) at **Klownz Araneta**
- **The CompanY** at **Brittany Bay** (Sucat) with Beth Martin on the acoustic grand piano
- **RJ and Friends** at the **Manila Polo Club**; 9 p.m. Call 899-3108
- **Lance Raymundo** at Manila Pavilion **Boulvar Lounge**; 8:30 p.m.
- **Kearny Street** at **Tavern on the Square**, Greenbelt 3
- **Bamboo** at **Metropolis Star Alabang**; 7 p.m.
- **Leggierro Strings** at **Taste Buds**, Robinsons Place Manila
- Star In A Million's **Lance Onate** at **Ratsky Tomas Morato**
- **Jed Madela** at **The Library** in Malate

Feb. 15

- **Kalapana** at the **Waterfront Hotel** in Cebu. Call 891-9999 and 871-7577
- **Silk** at **Suburbia**
- **Side A** at **Virgin Café**
- **Savannah** at **Merk's**, Greenbelt 3
- **Boyfriends** at **RJ Guitar Bar**
- **RJ** at Discovery Suites' **Serendipity Lounge**
- **Jeli Mateo** at Manila Pavilion **Boulvar Lounge**
- **Ntwine** at **Tavern on the Square**, Greenbelt 3
- **Human Things** at **Taste Buds**, Robinsons Place Manila
- Star In A Million's **Lance Onate** and **Randy Santiago** at **Ratsky Malate**
- "Cuadro King" of **Jose Manalo, Wally Bayola, Jimmy Santos** and **Francis M** at **Zirkoh**

Feb. 16

- **Nyoy Volante** and **Freeverse** at **Suburbia**
- **Mocha** at **Virgin Café**
- **RJ and Friends** at **L.A. Café Bar and Restaurant** for a fund-raising concert for Pasay City Streetchildren; 8 p.m. Call 899-3108
- **Moments** at **RJ Guitar Bar**
- **Sitti Navarro** at Manila Pavilion **Boulvar Lounge**
- **Ang4gettables** at **Tavern on the Square**, Greenbelt 3
- **K and The Boxers** at **Ratsky Malate**
- **Regine Velasquez, Kyla** and **Jonalyn Viray** at **Zirkoh**

Feb. 17

- **Livewire** and **Zyncxation** at **Suburbia**
- **Nina** and **King** at **Virgin Café**
- **Frenchie Dy** at **Zirkoh** with **AJ Dee, Drew Arellano, Mariel Rodriguez, Bianca Gonzales, Kim Flores** and **Erik Santos**
- **RJ and Friends** and **The Members Band** at **RJ Guitar Bar**
- **Margarita** and **Timeout** at Manila Pavilion **Boulvar Lounge**
- **9th Avenue** and **Michaelangelo** at **Tavern on the Square**, Greenbelt 3
- **Gladys Guevarra** at **Ratsky Malate**

Feb. 18

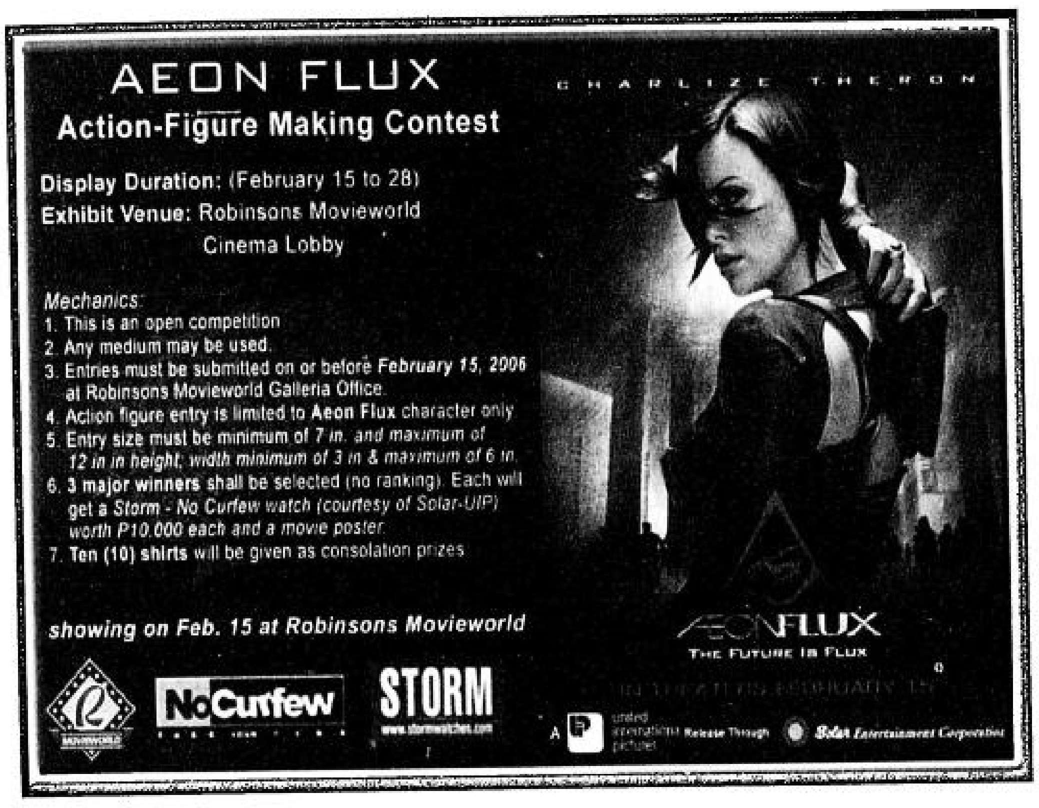
- **Erik Santos** at **Casino Angeles** with **Frenchie Dy**
- **Wiseguys** and **Freeway** at **Suburbia**
- **Abrakadabra** at **RJ Guitar**
- **Justine Draper** and **Divo Bayer** at Manila Pavilion **Boulvar Lounge**
- **Sipol** and **Dimsum** at **Tavern on the Square**, Greenbelt 3
- **The Manila Philharmonic Orchestra** at **Starmall Edsa**; 4 p.m.
- **King** and **Rush** at **Ratsky Malate**
- **Randy Santiago** at **Ratsky Tomas Morato**

Feb. 20

- **OJ Mariano** and **Czarina Rosales** at **Suburbia**
- **9th Avenue** at **Virgin Café**
- **Suzy Unas** at Manila Pavilion **Boulvar Lounge**
- **Groovewerk** at **Tavern on the Square**, Greenbelt 3

Feb. 21

- **Mr. God and Company** at **RJ Guitar Bar**
- **DK Tijam** at **Suburbia**

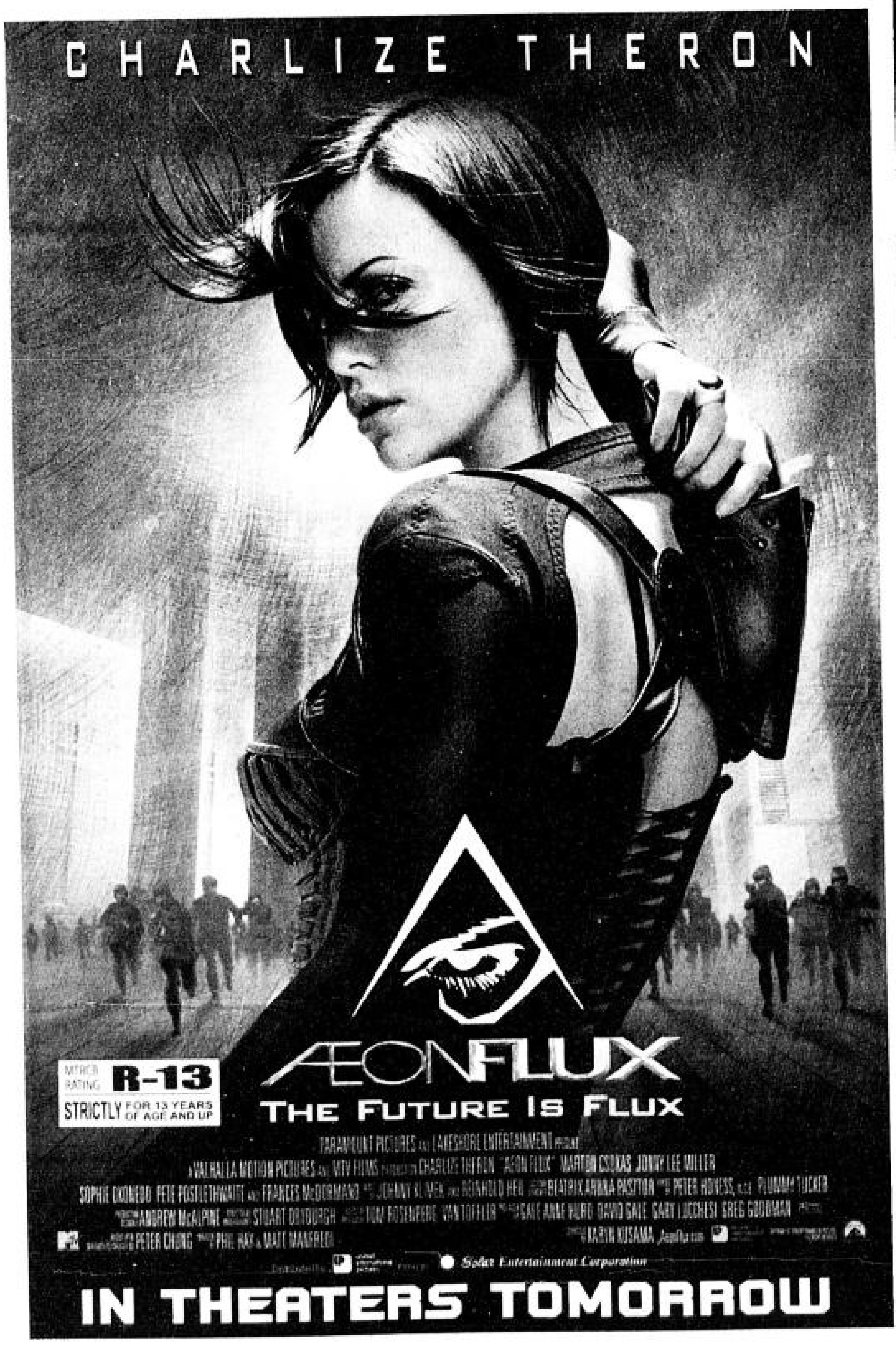


AEON FLUX
Action-Figure Making Contest
Display Duration: (February 15 to 28)
Exhibit Venue: Robinsons Movieworld Cinema Lobby

Mechanics:
1. This is an open competition
2. Any medium may be used.
3. Entries must be submitted on or before *February 15, 2006* at Robinsons Movieworld Galleria Office.
4. Action figure entry is limited to **Aeon Flux** character only
5. Entry size must be minimum of *7 in.* and maximum of *12 in in height; width minimum of 3 in & maximum of 6 in.*
6. **3 major winners** shall be selected (no ranking). Each will get a *Storm - No Curfew watch (courtesy of Solar-UIP) worth P10,000 each and a movie poster.*
7. **Ten (10) shirts** will be given as consolation prizes

showing on Feb. 15 at Robinsons Movieworld

CHARLIZE THERON
AEONFLUX
THE FUTURE IS FLUX
NoCurfew
STORM
www.stormwatches.com
A united international pictures Release Through Solar Entertainment Corporation



IN THEATERS TOMORROW

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AEONFLUX
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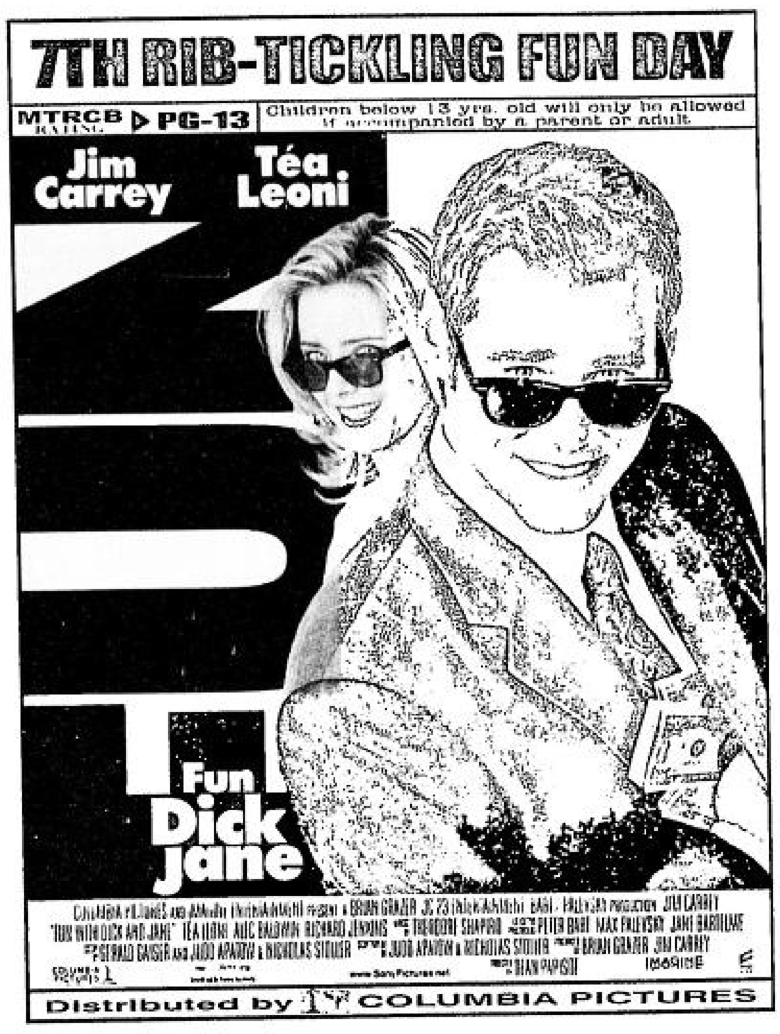

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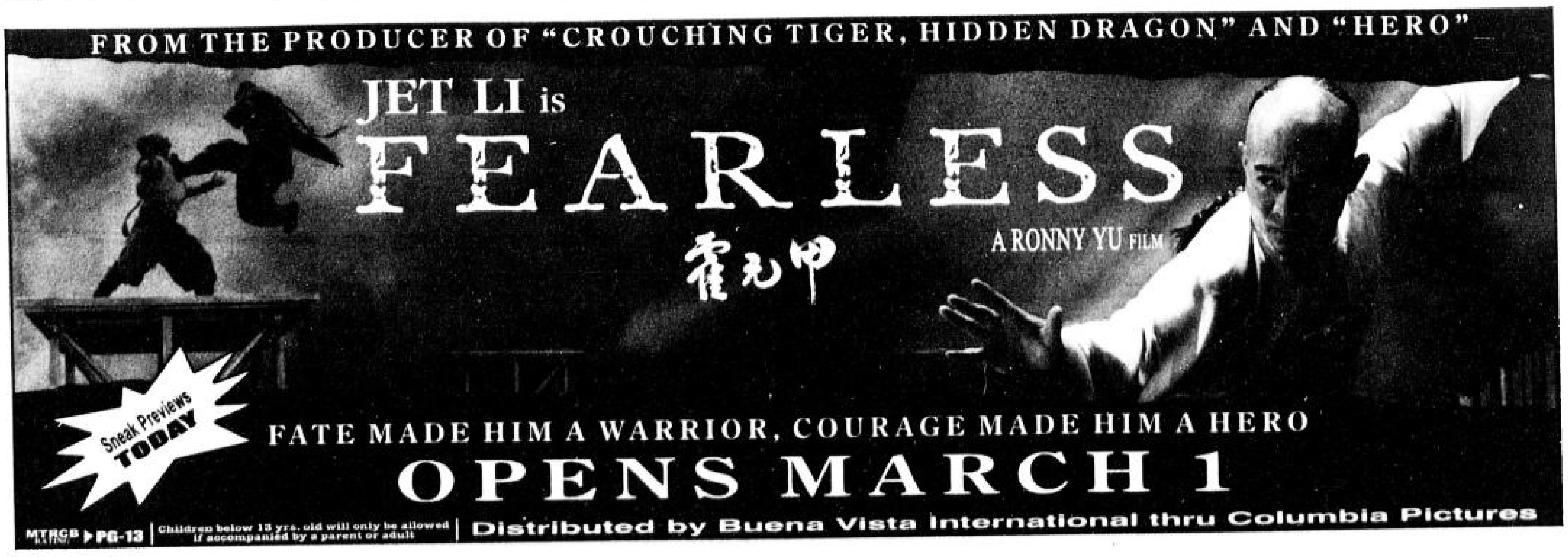
A War of Worlds. A Forbidden Love. A Shared Destiny.
The NEW WORLD
BASED ON A TRUE STORY



FROM THE PRODUCER OF "CROUCHING TIGER, HIDDEN DRAGON" AND "HERO"
OPENS MARCH 1
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JET LI is
FEARLESS
霍元甲
A RONNY YU FILM
Sneak Previews TODAY
FATE MADE HIM A WARRIOR, COURAGE MADE HIM A HERO

My three favorite show biz couples still going strong

DOLLY WOOD

Dolly Ann Carvajal

I MUST SAY IT'S MORE THAN JUST coincidence that Valentine's Day falls on the same day that this column is scheduled to come out. Cupid is giving the hopeless romantic in me (or is it hopeless case?) the perfect alibi to write about *amore*. Even if this Day of Hearts is more of a Day of Hurts for me this year, I am opting for vicarious thrills.

To put me in the mood, I thought of my three fave show biz couples—**Albert** and **Liezl Martinez**, **Cesar Montano** and **Sunshine Cruz**, **Julius** and **Tin-Tin Babao**. I asked the wives what's the most unforgettable thing their hubbies did for them, plus their V-Day message.

But before we go into that, allow me to salute The **Martinezes, Montanos** and **Babaos** for keeping their love afloat in turbulent show biz waters. Most celebrity couples turn this thing called love, which is supposed to be immortal, into something immoral! What with all the temptation that comes with the territory! These couples are living proof that marriage ain't passé in show biz *après tout*.

I am more than happy to have played a part in **Albert** and **Liezl**'s melodramatic love story. Before **Albert** flew to the United States to elope with **Liezl**, he told me about their plans. When they disappeared, a frantic *Tita* Nena (a.k.a. **Amalia Fuentes—Liezl**'s mom) waited for me to come home, to interrogate me. She waited for hours. I went home only when I knew she was gone. My vow of secrecy is as solid as **Albert** and **Liezl**'s marriage vows. They endured the unendurable during their struggling years in the US. I was moved to tears as one of their bridesmaids because I knew how they fought for their love. **Albert** and **Liezl** remind us that there are rewards for staying when the easier thing to do would be to leave.

I have seen **Buboy** and **Shine** in unguarded moments. I recently spent time with them in their Bohol rest house. She has really "tamed" him. I remember when **Buboy** and I were judges in Ms Sandugo (Bohol's Fairest). **Shine** wasn't able to watch the pageant; she kept badgering **Buboy**, asking if the candidates were sexier than she was, since she was pregnant at the time. **Buboy** played along and told her he fell for one of the girls. They taunted each other non-stop and we all had a good laugh watching them act like high school kids. **Buboy** and **Shine** teach us that even if marriage is serious business, couples should not forget to have fun.

It was a delight to be in "Magandang Umaga Bayan" ("M.U.P" now) with **Julius** and **Tin**. Even if my "Dollywood" movie review segment then was taped and theirs went on live, I often got to bond with the couple in the dressing room. There's usually an unwritten rule that co-workers should not fall for each other. **Julius** and **Tin** showed us that love makes you defy all the rules. It's more forgivable to break rules than to break hearts. The **Babaos** are role models for all friends who yearn to be lovers but are too cautious to make the move. Their story tells us that the friendship doesn't have to end just because we let love take over.

May the anecdotes below make your heart smile, knowing that even if love doesn't work for you right now, at least it does for others. There's always enough love to go around; we just all have to wait for our turn. Love is patient, but please hurry (hahaha)!

SUNSHINE Cruz and Cesar Montano

Liezl Martinez

JULIUS Babao and Tin-Tin Bersola-Babao

Albert has done so many unforgettable things for me throughout our 21 years of marriage. But what means the most to me is when he turned his back on everything and gave up his show biz career even when it was at its peak just to start a life with me from the bottom, with all the uncertainties. He didn't mind, as long as we were together. We had no maids in the US; we did everything on our own. He worked as a gasoline boy and was paid $3.20 per hour. He persevered, just so he could provide for me and our then unborn child **Alyanna**. He also worked as a baker even if he was allergic to flour because of his asthma. Once he had a severe attack at work and almost died! He could have had a life of luxury as an actor in the Philippines but he chose to be with me.

Albert, thank you for being my husband, my lover and best friend. Here's to another 21 years of marriage and beyond!

Sunshine Cruz

I'll never forget when **Buboy** first brought me to Bohol. He set a romantic dinner for two in the middle of nowhere and had the Loboc choir serenade me. That's when he asked me to be his wife.

Buboy, Whatever trials we go through—*kasi alam kong ang dami gustong guluhin ang* family *natin*—I assure you that I won't allow anybody or anything to ruin us. You are my life. Thanks for all the patience and understanding!"

Tin-Tin Babao

What stands out in my memory is when **Julius** proposed to me on national TV, on **Sharon Cuneta**'s show. I can never get over that! Recently, after mass, we were walking along the aisle and he suddenly looked at me and said, "I'll marry you a million times over!" I melted!

Julius, When all else is taken away from me, I will find comfort in the thought that I have you to love. I may not have all the things I dream of in life but at the end of the day I have love because I have you!"

PERSONAL: TO S.L., thanks for you-know-what…

(E-mail wateringholeshangrila@yahoo.com)

WEDDING photo of Liezl and Albert Martinez

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I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU 12:10 / 2:35 / 5:00 / 7:25 / 9:50	MUNICH 11:50 / 3:00 / 6:10 / 9:20	FEARLESS 1:00 / 3:10 / 5:20 / 7:30 / 9:40	FIREWALL 1:40 / 4:10 / 6:40 / 9:10
UNDERWORLD 2 2:00 / 4:20 / 6:40 / 9:00	CHEAPER BY THE DOZEN 2 1:00 / 3:15	DERAILED 1:40 / 4:20 / 7:00 / 9:40 SAW 2 5:40 / 7:40 / 9:40	ONLY P120 ADMISSION GLOBE PLATINUM P249/P299

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1	I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU 12:15 R4 / 1.20 / 3:45 / 6:10 / 8:35	FIREWALL 12:45 / 3:15 / 5:45 / 8:15	THE NEW WORLD 12:05 / 2:55 / 5:45 / 8:35
4	FUN WITH DICK & JANE 12:15 R2 / 2.05 / 4:15 / 6:25 / 8:35	FEARLESS 12:15 / 2.05 / 4:15 / 6:25 / 8:35	DOLBY DIGITAL dts SDDS

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MTRCB RATING-GP B

Watch "I Will Always Love You" and get a chance to win P100,000 cash, a trip to Hong Kong, and other amazing prizes! Here's how to join:

1. Every purchase of one (1) I Will Always Love You movie ticket in all participating cinemas from February 10 to 19, 2006 entitles you to one (1) raffle ticket.
2. Fill up the coupon with your name, address, telephone number and signature and drop in drop boxes located at the theater lobby.
3. Raffle tickets must be dropped in drop boxes on or before February 19, 2006.
4. Grand Draw will be held on February 23, 2006 at Eat Bulaga between 1:30-2:30PM. All entries will be consolidated at Eat Bulaga, Broadway Centrum where up for grabs are the following:
One (1) Grand Prize winner - PhP 100,000.00 cash

Other prizes:
Three (3) winners of roundtrip tickets to Hong Kong Disneyland for two for four days-three nights
Five (5) winners of Sanyo ST-21G1 53.34 cm (21") TV sets
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Five (5) winners of IPod Shuffle 512 MB M-9724ZP/A
Ten (10) winners of Orange DVD players
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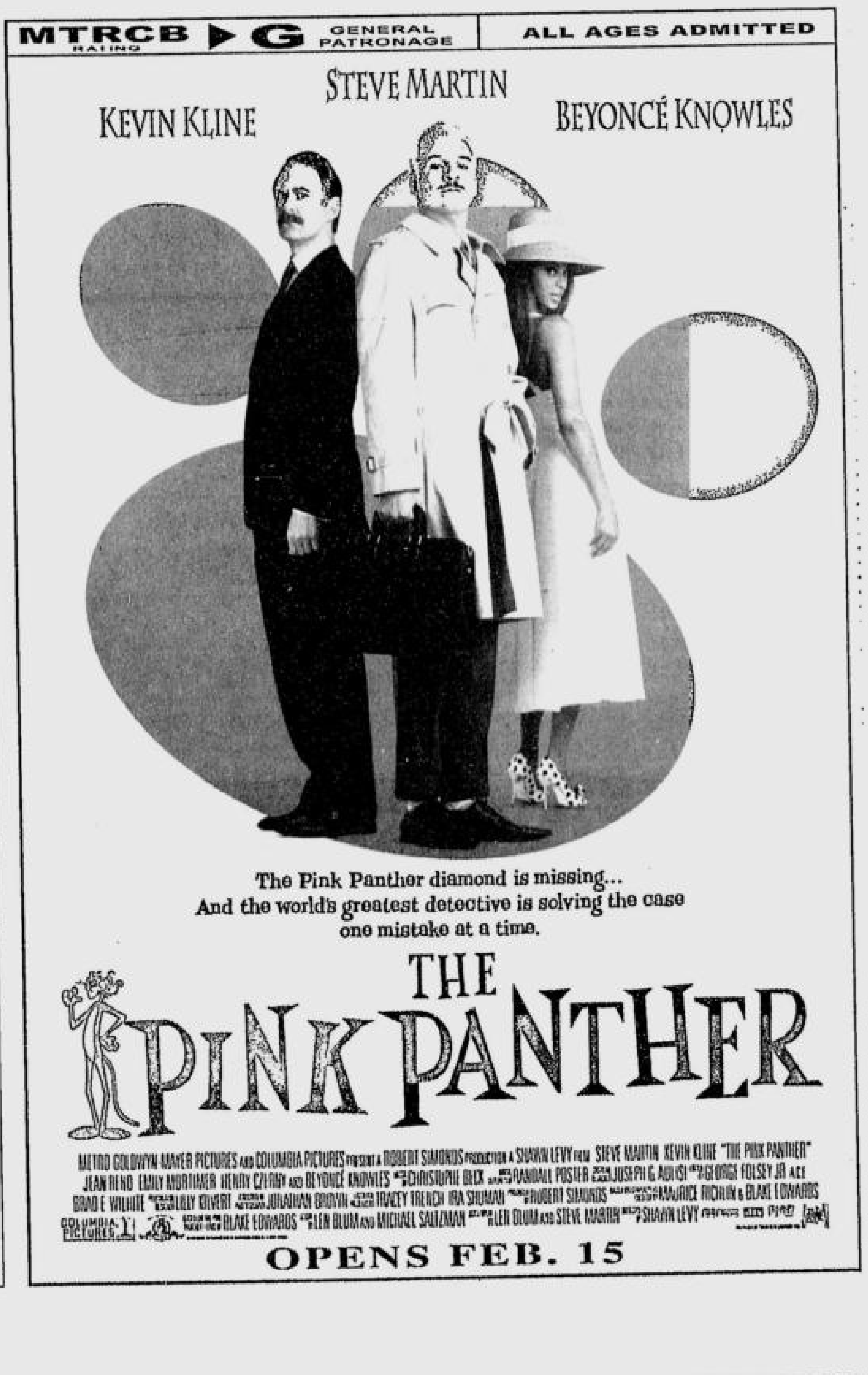
Four (4) winners of M2923B 50.8cm (20") Easy Rider bicycles
Three (3) winners of American Home AWT-631P washing machines w/ dryer
Two (2) La Germania SL530-00W gas ranges

5. Winners can only win once. In the event that a name is picked more than once, he/she will get the price of higher value.
6. Winners will be contacted by phone and/or registered mail.
7. Present the winning raffle claim stub and one (1) valid ID when claiming the prizes.
8. Prizes should be claimed at the Regal Entertainment, Inc. office at #38 Valencia St. Quezon City
beginning February 24, 2006. The winner must claim his prize within sixty (60) days from receipt of notification. Failure to claim within the allotted time duration forfeits the winner's right over the prize with prior DTI approval.
9. NMI shall contact winners outside Metro Manila and let them choose whether they want to receive their prize via courier or claim it at the Regal Office. Winners shall shoulder all shipping costs.
10. All employees of GMA Network Inc., GMA New Media Inc., Regal Entertainment, Inc., participating cinemas and their relatives up to the second degree of affinity or consanguinity are disqualified from joining.

Per DTI-NCR Permit # 0883, series of 2006



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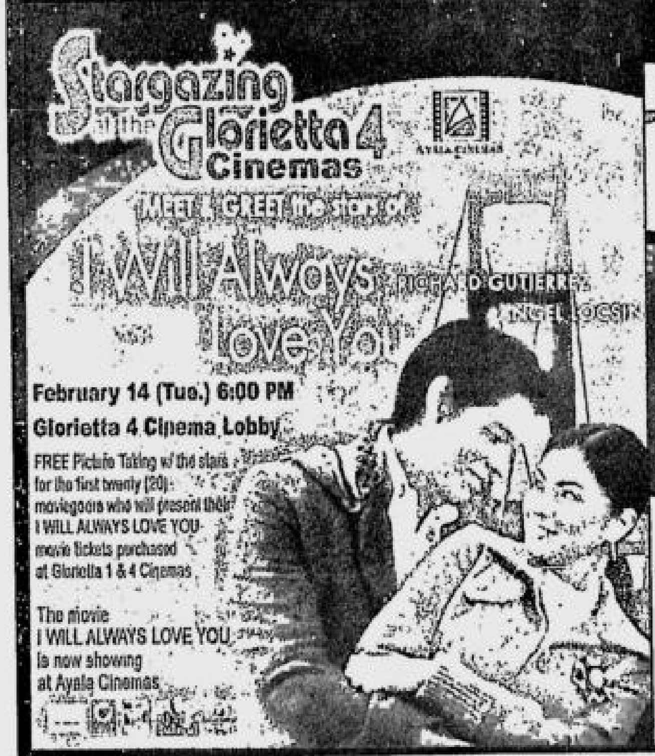
G1 GLORIETTA 1	1	FIREWALL	
	2	I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU	
	3	UNDERWORLD: EVOLUTION	
	4	FUN W/ DICK & JANE	
G4 GLORIETTA 4	1	FUN W/ DICK & JANE	
	2	I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU	
	3 THX	THE NEW WORLD	GUARANTEED SEATS
	4	DERAILED	
	5	CHEAPER BY THE DOZEN 2	
	6	FIREWALL	
	7	MUNICH	
GB1 GREENBELT 1	1	FUN W/ DICK & JANE	
	2	FIREWALL	
GB3 GREENBELT 3	1 THX	THE NEW WORLD	GUARANTEED SEATS
	2 THX	WALK THE LINE	GUARANTEED SEATS
	3	DERAILED	GUARANTEED SEATS
	4	MUNICH	GUARANTEED SEATS
	5	FUN W/ DICK & JANE	GUARANTEED SEATS
ATC ALABANG TOWN CENTER	1 THX	FIREWALL	
	2	THE NEW WORLD	
	3	FUN W/ DICK & JANE	
	4	MUNICH	
	5	I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU	
ACC AYALA CENTER CEBU	1	FIREWALL	
	2	FUN W/ DICK & JANE	
	3	SAW 2	
	4	I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU	


Stargazing at the Glorietta 4 Cinemas
AYALA CINEMAS
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RICHARD GUTIERREZ
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① FEARLESS (Sneak Preview)
② FUN WITH DICK & JANE
③ THE NEW WORLD
④ FIREWALL
⑤ I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU

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Metro Point Mall
Feb. 25, Saturday, 4pm
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Feb. 26, Sunday, 4pm

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GALLERIA 632-9116

1 MUNICH • THX
12:45 3:50 6:55 10:00

2 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU
11:40 2:15 4:50 7:25 10:00

3 NEW WORLD
1:45 4:30 7:15 10:00

4 BLOODRAYNE
1:20 3:30 5:40 7:50 10:00

5 FUN with DICK and JANE
11:00 1:10 3:20 5:30 7:40 9:50

6 FIREWALL
12:00 2:30 5:00 7:30 10:00

7 FEARLESS
Sneak Preview

8 UNDERWORLD 2
12:50 3:10 5:30 7:50 10:00

9 SAW 2
1:20 3:30 5:40 7:50 10:00

10 WALK THE LINE
1:40 4:20 7:00 9:40

ERMITA 536-7809 to 12

1 FIREWALL
12:00 2:30 5:00 7:30 9:50

2 SAW 2
12:00 1:40 3:20 5:00 6:40 8:20 10:00

3 FEARLESS
Sneak Preview

4 NEW WORLD
12:00 2:30 5:00 7:30 10:00

5 FUN with DICK and JANE
12:30 2:50 5:10 7:30 9:50

6 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU
12:30 2:50 5:10 7:30 10:00

7 MUNICH
12:30 3:35 6:40 9:50

METRO EAST 682-8193 • 682-8199

1 FEARLESS
Sneak Preview

2 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU
11:50 2:10 4:30 6:50 9:10

3 FUN with DICK and JANE
11:45 2:05 4:25 6:45 9:05

4 NEW WORLD
12:00 3:00 6:00 9:00

5 UNDERWORLD 2
12:00 2:15 4:30 6:45 9:00

6 MUNICH
11:10 2:30 5:50 9:10

7 FIREWALL
12:10 2:30 4:50 7:10 9:30

8 WALK THE LINE
12:45 3:30 6:15 9:00

NOVALICHES 935-3231 / 935-3229-30

1 UNDERWORLD 2
2 SAW 2
3 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU
4 FIREWALL
5 WALK THE LINE
6 FUN with DICK and JANE
7 FEARLESS Sneak Preview

CITISQUARE MALABON 288-2575

1 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU
2 FIREWALL
3 RESERVE
4 RESERVE

PIONEER 687-5378

1 NEW WORLD
2 FIREWALL
3 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU
4 FUN with DICK and JANE

CHARLIZE THERON
AEONFLUX
THE FUTURE IS FLUX
IN THEATERS FEBRUARY 15
NoCurfew
STORM

AEON FLUX
Action-Figure Making Contest

Display Duration: (February 15 to 28)
Exhibit Venue: Robinsons Movieworld Cinema Lobby

Mechanics:
1. This is an open competition
2. Any medium may be used.
3. Entries must be submitted on or before *February 15, 2006* at Robinsons Movieworld Galleria Office
4. Action figure entry is limited to Aeon Flux character only
5. Entry size must be minimum of 7 in. and maximum of 12 in in height, width minimum of 3 in & maximum of 6 in.
6. 3 major winners shall be selected (no ranking). Each will get a Storm - No Curfew watch (courtesy of Solar UIP) worth P10,000 each and a movie poster.
7. Ten (10) shirts will be given as consolation prizes

showing on Feb. 15 at Robinsons Movieworld

STA. ROSA (049) 837-0907

1 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU
2 FIREWALL
3 FUN with DICK and JANE
4 WALK THE LINE
5 UNDERWORLD 2

LIPA (043) 757-3884 (043) 312-5870

1 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU
2 LITTLE MANHATTAN
3 HALF LIGHT
4 THE MAID
5 FUN with DICK and JANE

DASMARIÑAS (046) 852-2125 (046) 416-4332

1 FIREWALL
2 HALF LIGHT
3 BLOODRAYNE
4 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU
5 FUN with DICK and JANE

ANGELES (045) 892-2348

1 FIREWALL
2 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU
3 SAW 2
4 FUN with DICK and JANE

IMUS (046) 875-3838 (046) 471-8168

1 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU
2 SAW 2
3 BLOODRAYNE
4 FIREWALL
5 FUN with DICK and JANE
6 FEARLESS Sneak Preview

STARMILLS (045) 875-1927 (045) 961-5270

1 ZATHURA
2 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU
3 FUN with DICK and JANE
4 FIREWALL
5 SAW 2
6 UNDERWORLD 2

BACOLOD (034) 441-0453 (034) 441-0459

1 FUN with DICK and JANE
2 RUMOR HAS IT
3 DERAILED
4 HALF LIGHT
5 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU
6 THE MAID

ILOILO (033) 336-8070

1 UNDERWORLD 2
2 FUN with DICK and JANE
3 LITTLE MANHATTAN
4 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU
5 THE MAID
6 HALF LIGHT

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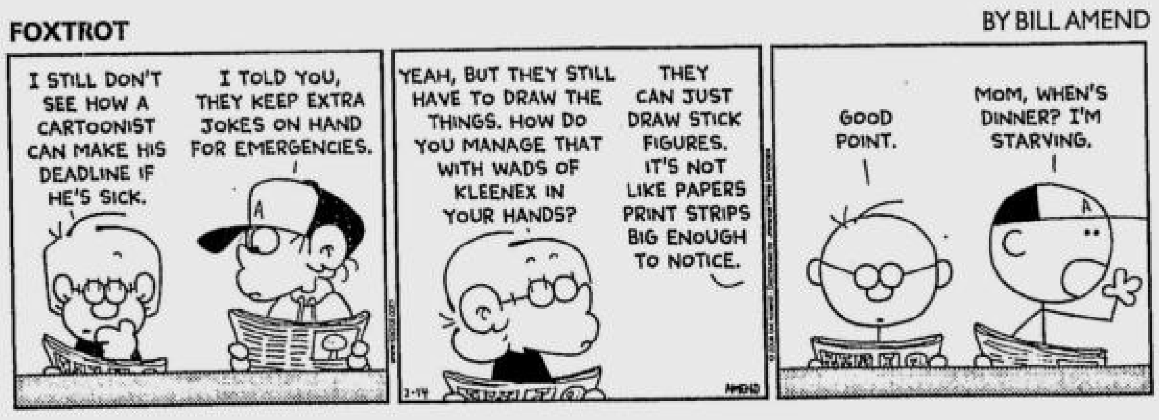
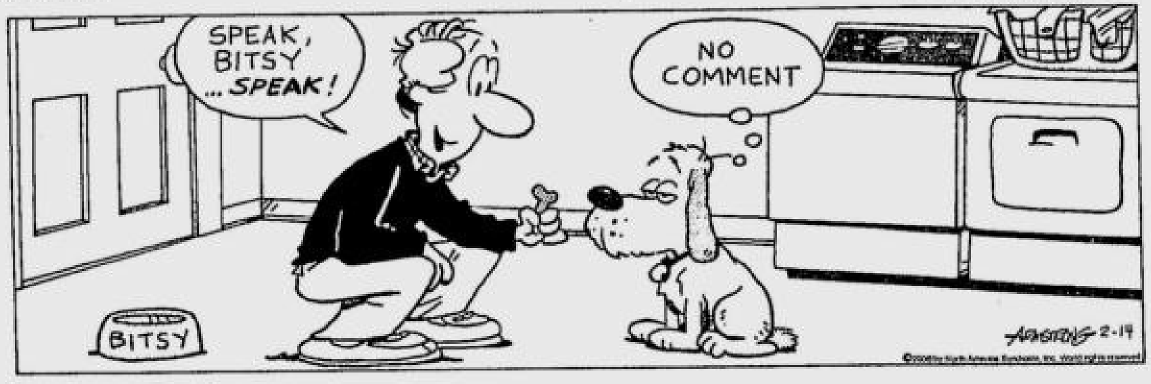
FOXTROT

BY BILL AMEND


I STILL DON'T SEE HOW A CARTOONIST CAN MAKE HIS DEADLINE IF HE'S SICK.
I TOLD YOU, THEY KEEP EXTRA JOKES ON HAND FOR EMERGENCIES.
YEAH, BUT THEY STILL HAVE TO DRAW THE THINGS. HOW DO YOU MANAGE THAT WITH WADS OF KLEENEX IN YOUR HANDS?
THEY CAN JUST DRAW STICK FIGURES. IT'S NOT LIKE PAPERS PRINT STRIPS BIG ENOUGH TO NOTICE.
GOOD POINT.
MOM, WHEN'S DINNER? I'M STARVING.
2-14
AMEND

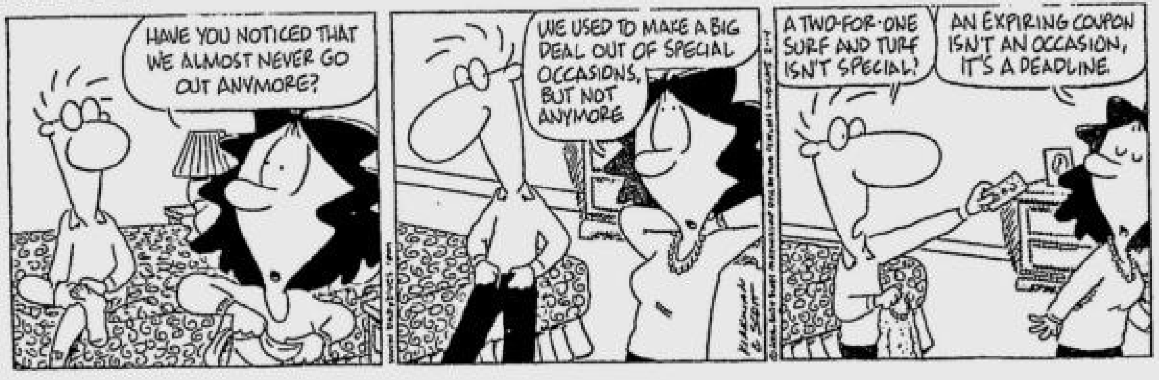
MARVIN

BY TOM ARMSTRONG


SPEAK, BITSY ...SPEAK!
NO COMMENT
BITSY
ARMSTRONG 2-14

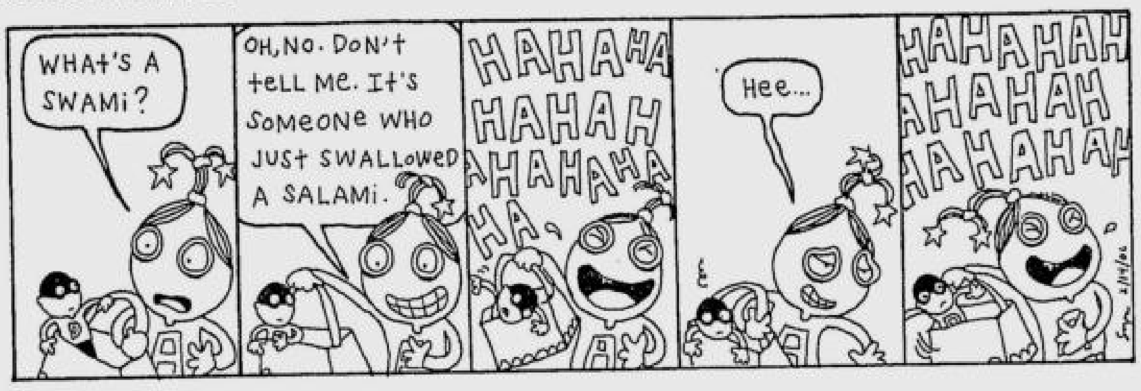
BABY BLUES

BY JERRY SCOTT


HAVE YOU NOTICED THAT WE ALMOST NEVER GO OUT ANYMORE?
WE USED TO MAKE A BIG DEAL OUT OF SPECIAL OCCASIONS, BUT NOT ANYMORE
A TWO-FOR-ONE SURF AND TURF ISN'T SPECIAL!
AN EXPIRING COUPON ISN'T AN OCCASION, IT'S A DEADLINE.

ATOMO AND WEBOY

BY LYRA GARCELLANO


WHAT'S A SWAMi?
OH, NO. DON'T tell Me. It's SoMeone WHO JUSt SWALLoWeD A SALAMi.
HAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHA
Hee...
HAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAH
2/14/06

HOROSCOPE

BY FRANCIS DRAKE

YOU BORN TODAY: You have a great sense of humor, and you know how to make others laugh. You also know how to shock people to get their attention. You often use your wit to explain the world around you to everyone you meet. Privately, you're quite philosophical. Expect a friendly, social year ahead. Partnerships are blessed.
Birthdate of: Drew Bledsoe, quarterback; Meg Tilly, actress; Jack Benny, comedian.

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): This is an exciting day. All sorts of goodies, gifts and favors might suddenly come to you in a quite unexpected manner. Be gracious and say "thank you." (You deserve these.)

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): Marvelous opportunities to travel or promote your good name in publishing and the media, or to further your studies or training in some way, are possible today. Be ready for anything!

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): Many of you will discover or learn about unexpected job opportunities or ways to improve your career today. Don't be afraid to grab them! You have to act fast, because this window of opportunity is brief.

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): You're full of bright, exciting ideas. Other cultures and different peoples intrigue you today. New love can deepen now.

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): Unexpected gifts or resources are now available to you. What a stroke of luck! Quite likely, this favors your job, or possibly your home.

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): Exciting flirtations, new acquaintances and even love at first sight make your heart beat a little faster today. Creative opportunities abound!

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): Unexpected news at work might impact your home and family life in a nice way. This is an excellent day for real estate or for buying beautiful things for your home or a family member.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): Today is full of unexpected little surprises. Your positive, upbeat nature encourages good things to come your way. (When you expect the best, you often get it!)

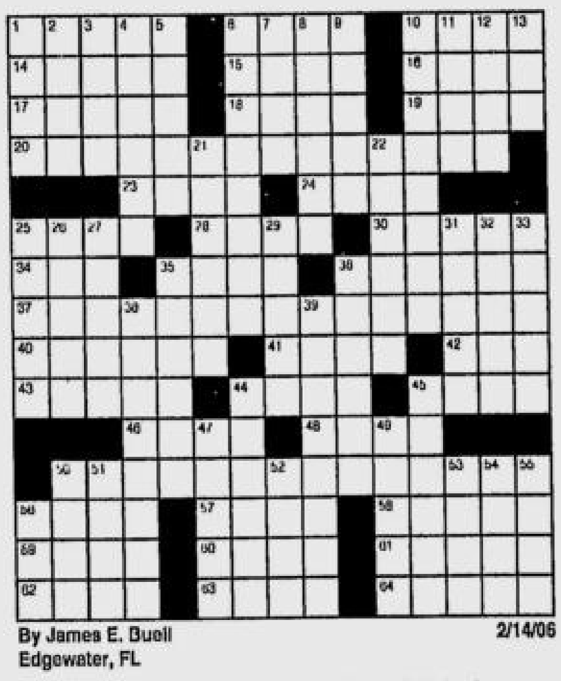
SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): Purchases for your home will please you today. Quite likely, something very high-tech, scientific or unexpected will be introduced to your family or where you live.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): You feel friendly toward everyone you meet today. Not only that, but others are friendly to you as well. This excites you and makes you glad to be alive!

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): New money-making ideas definitely occur to you today. Unexpected job opportunities and sudden purchases are exciting. You see new ways of handling and using what you own.

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): Expect to meet someone new and different today. This person could be a real character. He or she might introduce you to a group or an entirely new way of thinking that you find liberating!

DAILY CROSSWORD



By James E. Buell
Edgewater, FL

2/14/06

ACROSS

1 Surface life
6 Nail puller
10 Stalled construction
14 Mazda two-seater
15 Famed framed Mona
16 1997 Peter Fonda title role
17 Gaucho's goodbye
18 Sworn statement
19 Tug at the heartstrings
20 Relax!
23 Morse bits
24 Purely academic
25 Sch. auxiliaries
28 Han Solo's love
30 On the up-and-up
34 Resistance measurement
35 Mournful utterance
36 Break in twain
37 Relax!
40 Set sail
41 Private English school
42 Conquistador's gold
43 Brewery supply
44 Fulda tributary
45 __ Mawr College
46 Bridge coup
48 El __, TX
50 Relax!
56 Confidential assistant
57 Small-minded
58 Spine-tingling
59 Do in
60 Breton, e.g.
61 Visual how-tos
62 Clothes lines?
63 Nobel Institute city
64 Traverses

DOWN

1 Minor tender in India
2 Italian beach resort
3 Olympian Devers
4 Butting heads
5 No-stress class
6 2006 Steve Martin role
7 Barefaced one
8 Respiratory disorder
9 Yippee!
10 Bad advice
11 Soothing additive
12 Tach readings
13 Past tense of "naitre"
21 Isn't that a sight!
22 Hit town
25 Big house
26 Unifying idea
27 Lab 101 cell
29 How to write losses
31 Florida snapper
32 "It floats" soap
33 Mortise mate
35 __ Beach, S.C.
36 For a group of singers
38 Master openers
39 Set foot, say
44 Runs the show
45 Sheep loser
47 "The Transmission Experts"
49 Musher vehicles
50 Scrabble piece
51 Eve's man
52 Comic Rich or Brad
53 "__ la Douce"
54 Disney King
55 Discount word
56 Remains in a tray

Monday's Puzzle Solved

J	A	M	B	■	B	R	A	D	■	T	R	U	N	K
E	Q	U	I	■	L	A	S	E	■	I	O	N	I	A
A	U	T	O	C	O	M	P	A	R	T	M	E	N	T
N	A	T	■	R	O	S	I	T	A	■	P	A	T	H
■	■	■	S	U	P	■	C	H	I	P	■	S	H	Y
E	N	D	U	S	E	R	■	■	T	R	E	Y	S	■
M	A	I	N	T	R	E	E	S	T	E	M	■	■	■
T	E	E	S	■	■	A	T	E	■	■	E	D	G	E
■	■	■	E	L	E	P	H	A	N	T	N	O	S	E
■	L	A	T	E	X	■	■	R	A	W	D	E	A	L
R	U	M	■	D	I	B	S	■	H	A	S	■	■	■
E	N	T	O	■	T	O	P	G	U	N	■	A	P	E
L	A	R	G	E	S	T	O	R	A	G	E	B	O	X
I	C	A	L	L	■	C	R	I	T	■	V	E	G	A
T	Y	K	E	S	■	H	T	M	L	■	A	T	O	M

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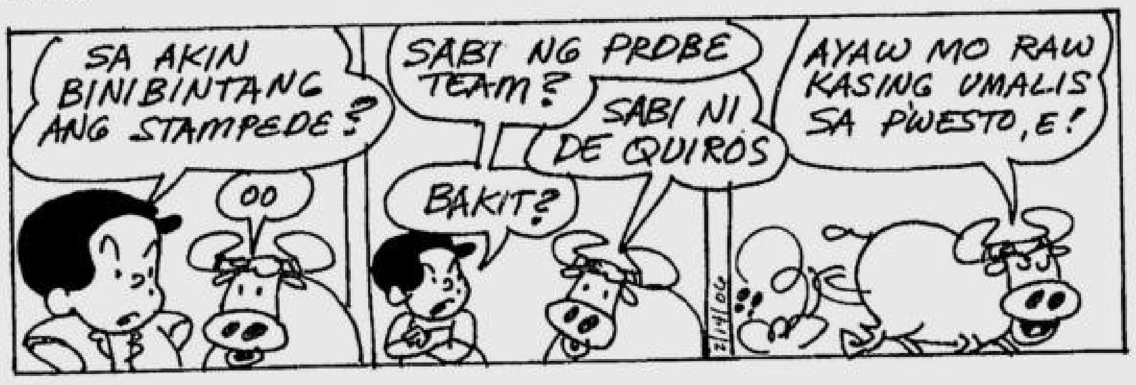
2/14/06

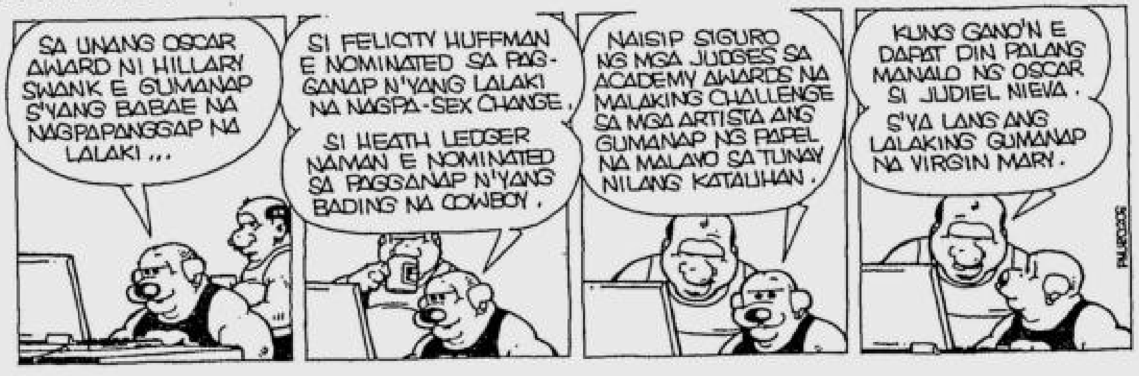
A. LIPIN

BY JESS ABRERA


SA AKIN BINIBINTANG ANG STAMPEDE?
OO
SABI NG PROBE TEAM?
SABI NI DE QUIROS
BAKIT?
AYAW MO RAW KASING UMALIS SA PWESTO, E!
2/14/06

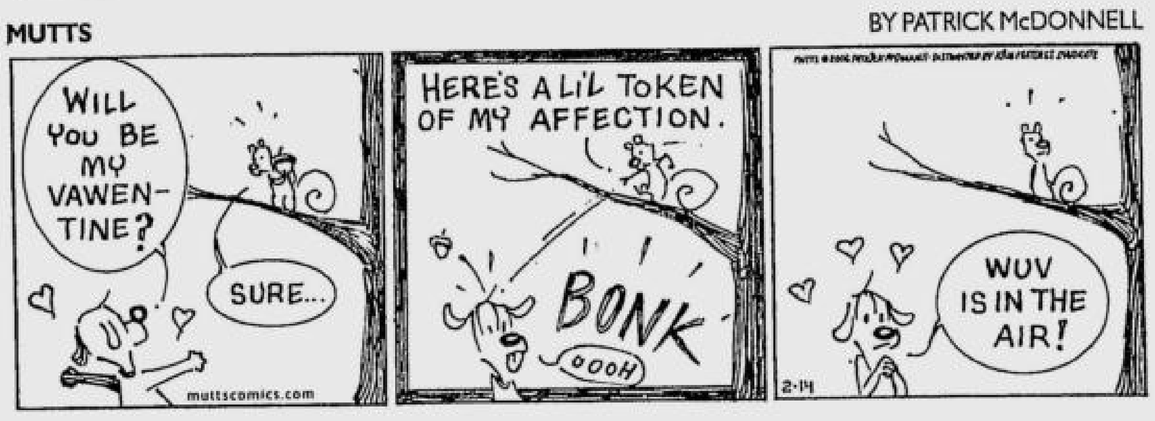
PUGAD BABOY

BY P.M. JUNIOR


SA UNANG OSCAR AWARD NI HILLARY SWANK E GUMANAP S'YANG BABAE NA NAGPAPANGGAP NA LALAKI ...
SI FELICITY HUFFMAN E NOMINATED SA PAG-GANAP N'YANG LALAKI NA NAGPA-SEX CHANGE.
SI HEATH LEDGER NAMAN E NOMINATED SA PAGGANAP N'YANG BADING NA COWBOY.
NAISIP SIGURO NG MGA JUDGES SA ACADEMY AWARDS NA MALAKING CHALLENGE SA MGA ARTISTA ANG GUMANAP NG PAPEL NA MALAYO SA TUNAY NILANG KATAUHAN.
KUNG GANO'N E DAPAT DIN PALANG MANALO NG OSCAR SI JUDIEL NIEVA.
S'YA LANG ANG LALAKING GUMANAP NA VIRGIN MARY.
PMJR2006

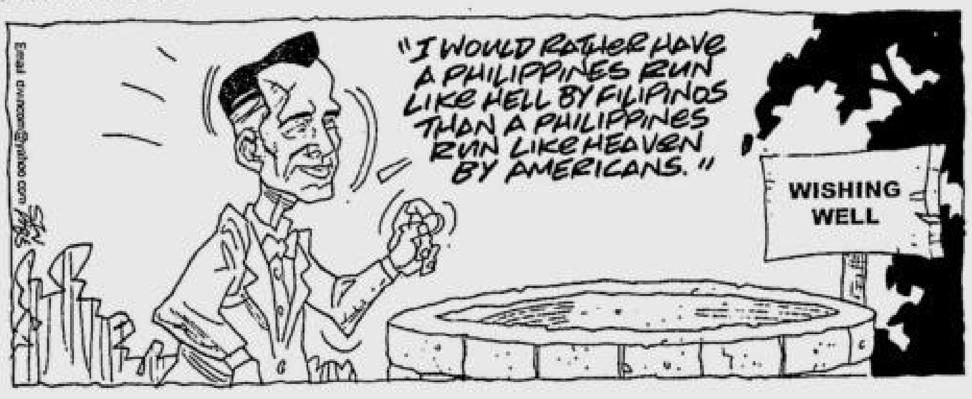
MUTTS

BY PATRICK McDONNELL


WILL YOU BE MY VAWENTINE?
SURE...
muttscomics.com
HERE'S A LI'L TOKEN OF MY AFFECTION.
BONK
OOOH
WUV IS IN THE AIR!
2-14

DIVINE COMEDY

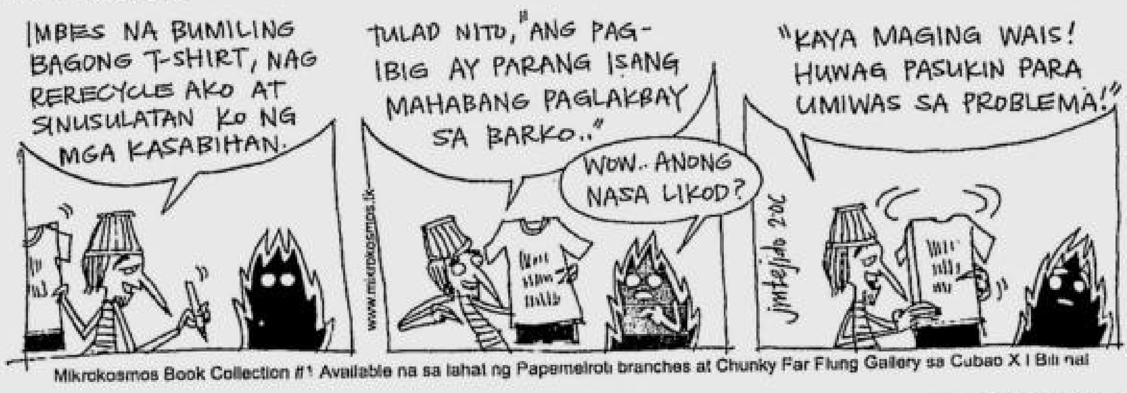
BY STEVEN PABALINAS


"I WOULD RATHER HAVE A PHILIPPINES RUN LIKE HELL BY FILIPINOS THAN A PHILIPPINES RUN LIKE HEAVEN BY AMERICANS."
WISHING WELL

PAGKATAPOS NG ILANG TAON, NATUPAD NA RIN ANG WISH NI PRESIDENT MANUEL QUEZON

MIKROKOSMOS

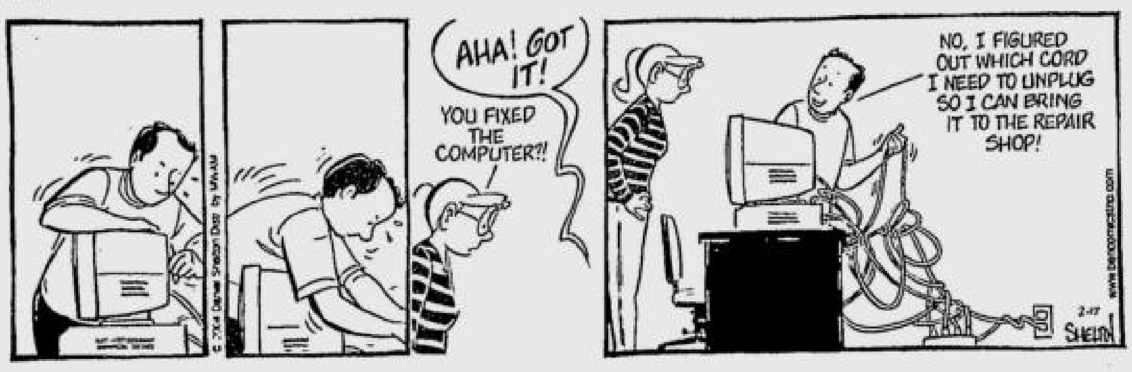
BY JOMIKE TEJIDO


IMBES NA BUMILING BAGONG T-SHIRT, NAG RERECYCLE AKO AT SINUSULATAN KO NG MGA KASABIHAN.
TULAD NITO, "ANG PAG-IBIG AY PARANG ISANG MAHABANG PAGLAKBAY SA BARKO.."
WOW.. ANONG NASA LIKOD?
www.mikrokosmos.tk
jmtejido 2'06
"KAYA MAGING WAIS! HUWAG PASUKIN PARA UMIWAS SA PROBLEMA!"

Mikrokosmos Book Collection #1 Available na sa lahat ng Papemelroti branches at Chunky Far Flung Gallery sa Cubao X I Bili na!

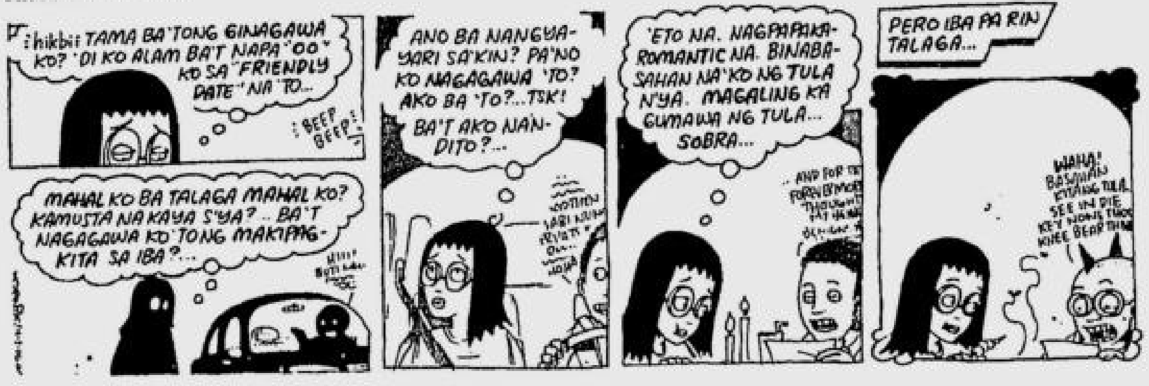
BEN

BY DANIEL SHELTON


AHA! GOT IT!
YOU FIXED THE COMPUTER?!
NO, I FIGURED OUT WHICH CORD I NEED TO UNPLUG SO I CAN BRING IT TO THE REPAIR SHOP!
SHELTON

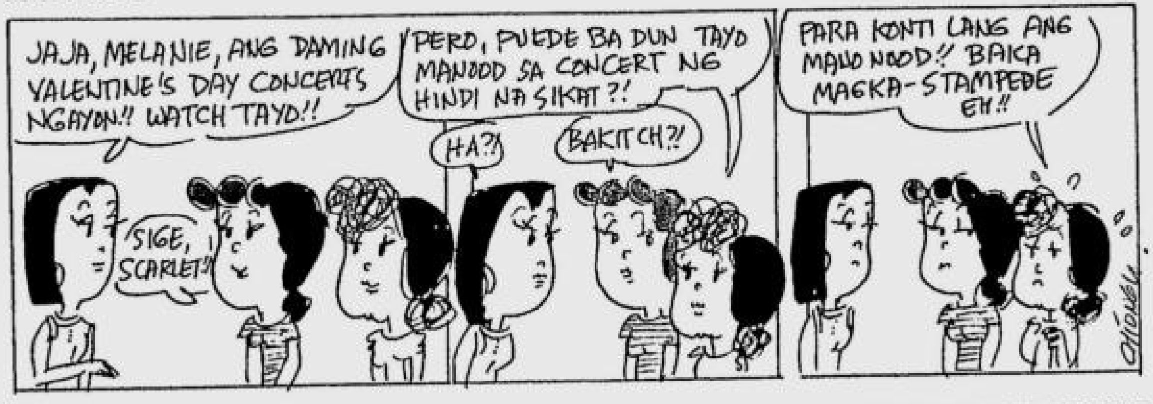
KIKO MACHINE

BY MANIX ABRERA


:hikbi: TAMA BA 'TONG GINAGAWA KO? 'DI KO ALAM BA'T NAPA "OO" KO SA "FRIENDLY DATE" NA 'TO...
BEEP BEEP!
MAHAL KO BA TALAGA MAHAL KO? KAMUSTA NA KAYA S'YA? .. BA'T NAGAGAWA KO 'TONG MAKIPAG-KITA SA IBA?...
ANO BA NANGYAYARI SA'KIN? PA'NO KO NAGAGAWA 'TO? AKO BA 'TO?...TSK!
BA'T AKO NANDITO?...
'ETO NA. NAGPAPAKA-ROMANTIC NA. BINABASAHAN NA'KO NG TULA N'YA. MAGALING KA GUMAWA NG TULA... SOBRA...
PERO IBA PA RIN TALAGA...
WAHA!

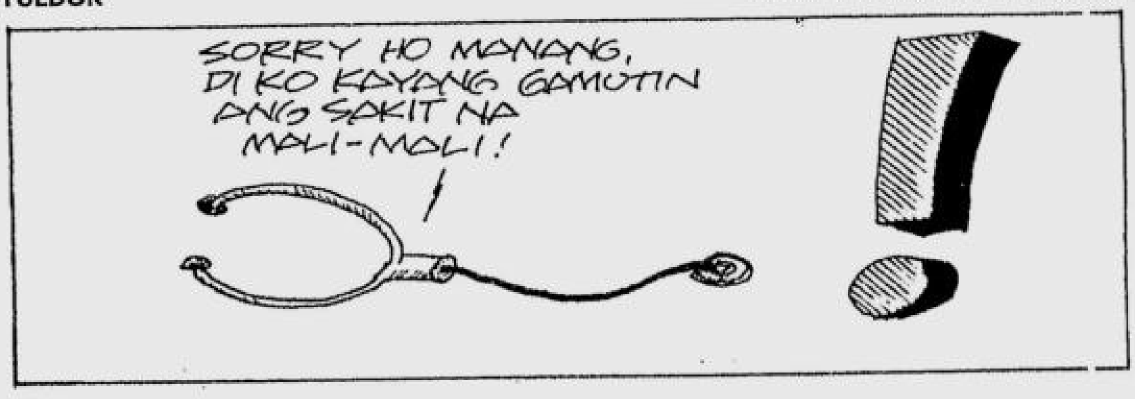
LOVEKNOTS

BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO


JAJA, MELANIE, ANG DAMING VALENTINE'S DAY CONCERTS NGAYON!! WATCH TAYO!!
SIGE, SCARLET!!
PERO, PUEDE BA DUN TAYO MANOOD SA CONCERT NG HINDI NA SIKAT?!
HA?!
BAKITCH?!
PARA KONTI LANG ANG MANONOOD!! BAKA MAGKA-STAMPEDE EH!!
CHIONGLO

TULDOK

BY PAPU AND TATUM MILAMBILING


SORRY HO MANANG, DI KO KAYANG GAMUTIN ANG SAKIT NA MALI-MALI!

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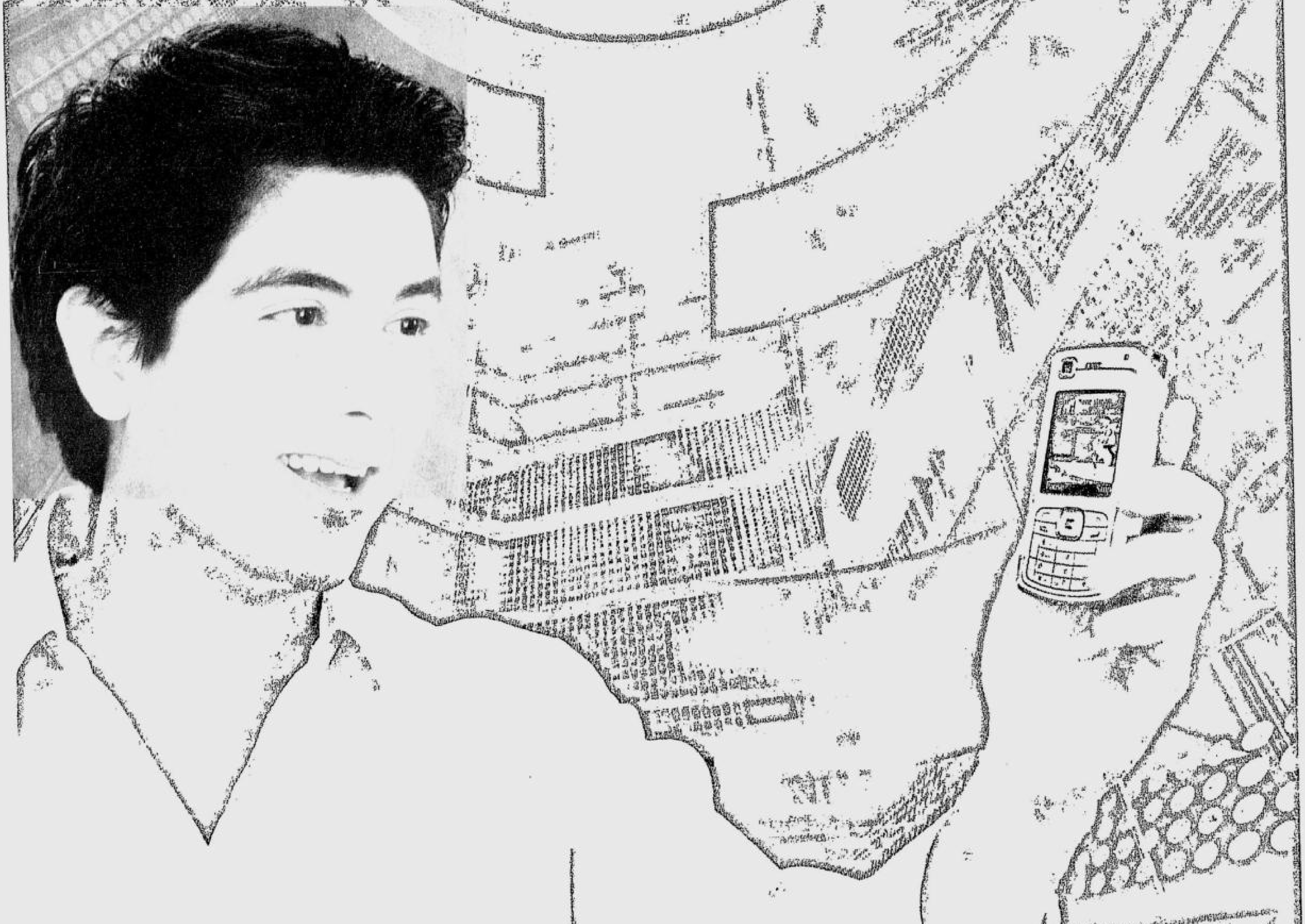
You don't have to miss the action because you can watch your favorite games, videos and TV programs through the power of Smart 3G. Starting today, Smart subscribers with 3G phones can avail of this service on a FREE trial basis in selected key cities nationwide. Another innovation brought to you by the leader in wireless communications.*



*Text 3G to 60034 or go to www.smart.com.ph for more information. For inquiries, please call the Smart Hotline at *888 or visit any Smart Wireless Center nationwide.*

* Nokia 6630 • Nokia 6680 • Nokia n70 • Nokia n90 • Sony Ericsson K600i • Sony Ericsson Z800i • Sony Ericsson W900i

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From Pagudpud to Sorsogon
1114 km*
on just one full tank.
XTRA
*Actual test result on a 1300 cc vehicle, as certified true by Automobile Association of the Philippines and Car Awards Group, Inc.
PETRON

Treasury bill rates ease across the board

Demand boosted by improved credit outlook

By Michelle V. Remo

TREASURY BILL RATES DECLINED ACROSS THE BOARD yesterday as market sentiment on the government's fiscal condition was lifted by the improved credit outlook given by Standard & Poor's and FitchRatings.

The bellwether 91-day treasury bill yield dropped a basis point to 5.087 percent as volume of bids stood higher than the government's P1-billion offering at P2.66 billion. The Bureau of the Treasury's auction committee accepted P1 billion worth of bids.

"The appetite (for government securities) is very good. This is influenced by the announcement of an improved outlook by credit-rating agencies," said National Treasurer Omar Cruz in a press briefing after yesterday's T-bill auctions.

The 182-day bills fetched 6.168 percent, or 5.3 basis points lower than the previous week's. The six-month bills were more than six times oversubscribed with volume of bids reaching P7.24 billion compared with the P1-billion offering.

The Treasury decided to accept P1.4 billion worth of bids, or P400 million higher than the programmed debt offering due to the strong demand for the 182-day paper.

The rate for the 364-day bills reached 7.24 percent, declining by 7.9 basis points from the previous week's. Bids for the one-year securities stood at P5.89 bil-

TREASURY/B2

YUCHENGCO

Yuchengco retires; daughter Helen is successor

TAIPAN ALFONSO T. YUCHENGCO IS retiring as chair of the Yuchengco Group of Companies and is relinquishing all other posts he holds in the group this month.

A successful diplomat-businessman and philanthropist, Yuchengco said he was leaving the reins over YGC to his eldest daughter Helen Y. Dee.

The 83-year-old Yuchengco, or 'AY' as he is known in business circles, is acknowledged as one of the Philippines' most successful taipans, having propelled the growth of YGC from its humble operation of a small insurance firm, China Insurance and Surety Co. Inc. (now Malayan Insurance Co. Inc.) along Gandara Street in Binondo, to what it is now—one of the country's biggest business conglomerates.

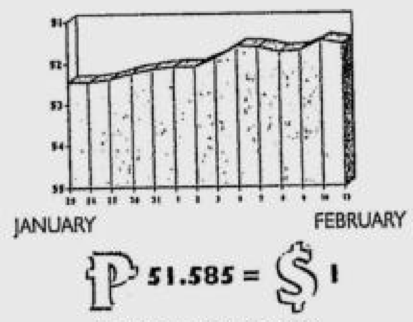
To date, YGC has more than 40 member-firms, each a major industry player. It has four flagship companies: Rizal Commercial Banking Corp. (RCBC), Malayan Group of Insurance Companies, Great Pacific Life Assurance Corp. (Grepalife) and House of Investments Inc. (HI). It has also ventured into providing university education through Mapua Institute of Technology, and construction and engineering services through EEI Corp.

Yuchengco was instrumental in turning RCBC from a private development bank in 1960 into one of the country's largest universal banks today, with consolidated assets totaling nearly P200 billion. He has also established a formidable presence in the insurance

YUCHENGCO/B4

INDICATORS

CURRENCIES

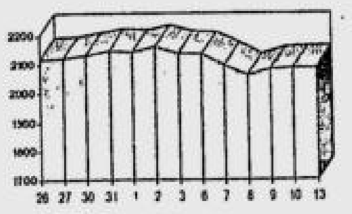


P 51.585 = $ 1
As of 5 p.m., Feb. 13, 2006

¥ 117.88 = $ 1
As of 5 p.m., Feb. 13, 2006

GOLD: $546.50-547.00
per ounce Hong Kong, Feb. 13, 2006

STOCK MARKET



(See stock market report on Page B4)

Stocks down despite rating upgrade

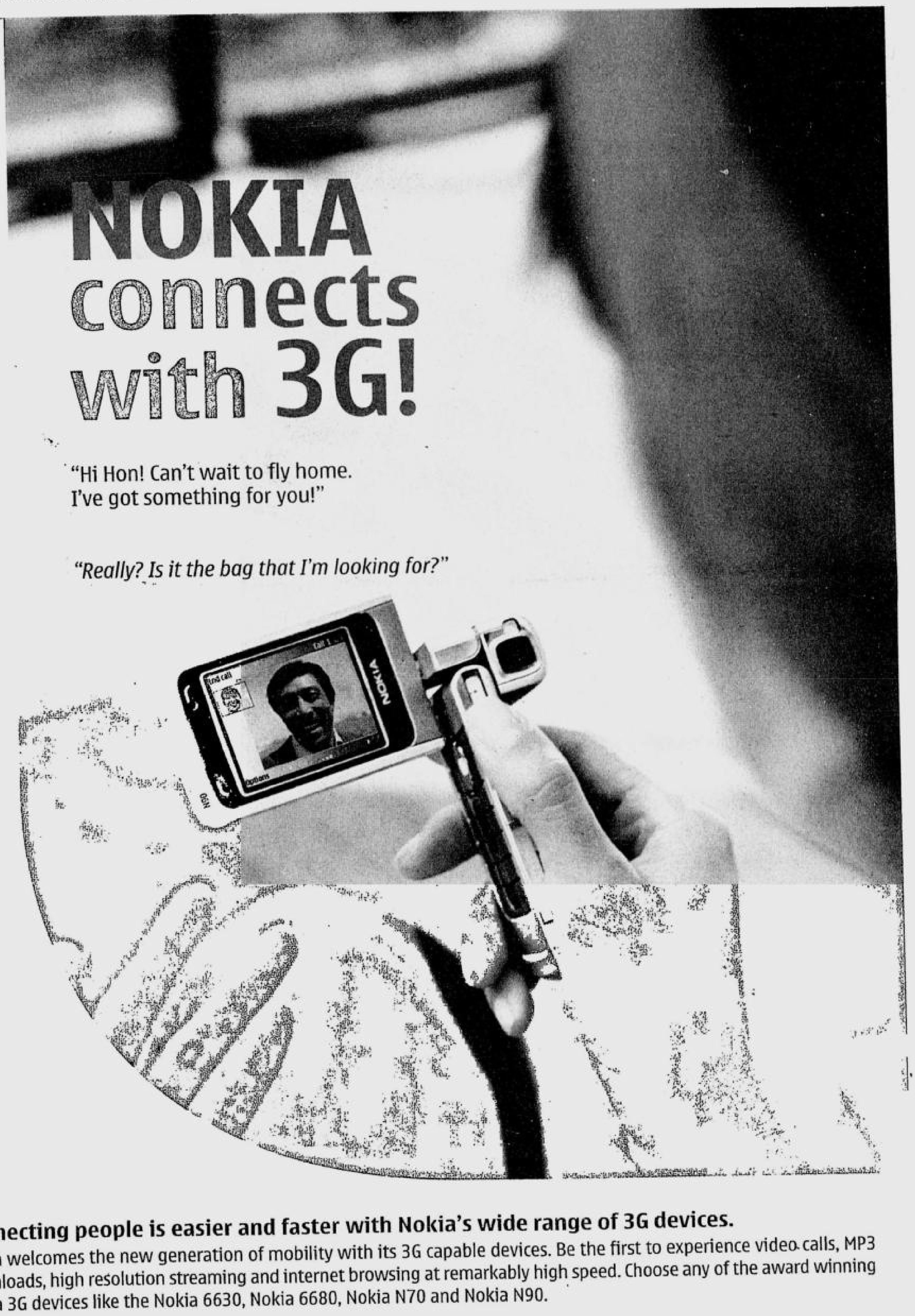
SHARE PRICES CLOSED 0.11-PERCENT HIGHER yesterday as the market continued to consolidate, paying little attention to Fitch's upgrade of the country's rating outlook, dealers said.

They said the market was awaiting blue-chip 2005 results due from later this week, with most fairly confident the figures will be positive.

The composite index rose 2.35 points to 2,087.64 after trading between 2,077.36 and 2,087.86. Volume was 609.4 million shares worth P1.07 billion.

The broader all-shares index was down 0.07 points at 977.66.

Gainers outnumbered losers 38 to 29, with 52 stocks unchanged. AFP


NOKIA
connects
with 3G!

"Hi Hon! Can't wait to fly home.
I've got something for you!"

"Really? Is it the bag that I'm looking for?"

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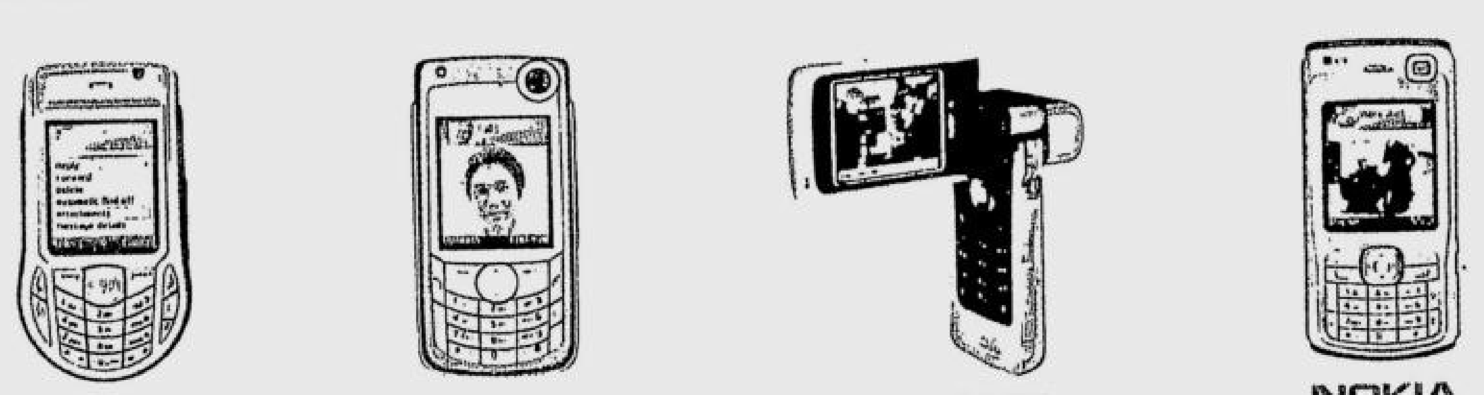
Connecting people is easier and faster with Nokia's wide range of 3G devices.
Nokia welcomes the new generation of mobility with its 3G capable devices. Be the first to experience video calls, MP3 downloads, high resolution streaming and internet browsing at remarkably high speed. Choose any of the award winning Nokia 3G devices like the Nokia 6630, Nokia 6680, Nokia N70 and Nokia N90.


NOKIA 6630

NOKIA 6680
Rated as "Best in Class" 3G Device*

NOKIA N90
European Media Phone of the Year

NOKIA N70

3G
Supports 3G (WCDMA) services

NOKIA
Connecting People
www.nokia.com.ph

* By Strategy Analytics' Advanced Wireless Laboratory (AWL) panels in London, UK and Milan, Italy. May 2005.
3G (WCDMA) services are network dependent. Please check with your operator.
Make sure your new Nokia Mobile Phone comes with original enhancements and is protected by a 12-month warranty on parts and services from Nokia Care. Buy only at authorized Nokia outlets. For inquiries, call the Nokia Careline at (02) 886-1234.

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2. Please accomplish the INFORMATION AND PRE QUALIFICATION FORM and send via fax or e-mail to DII CAPITAL CORPORATION within 3 calendar days.

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20 cities cited most viable RP business sites

By Ronnel W. Domingo

TWENTY CITIES ACROSS THE COUNTRY ARE CONSIDERED TO BE the "most competitive" in nurturing an environment that makes people and businesses most productive, according to a nationwide study.

The Asian Institute of Management (AIM) Policy Center, with the help of the United States Agency for International Development and Germany's Technical Cooperation unit, conducted the study—the Philippine Cities Competitiveness Ranking Project—and announced the results during a forum held yesterday at the Hotel Intercontinental in Makati City.

About 65 cities of varying sizes were covered in the study.

The cities included in the study were evaluated based on seven factors that drive competitiveness, AIMPC executive director Federico M. Macaranas said during the forum attended by the sponsors of the study, as well as by city mayors and local government officials.

The evaluations were based on statistics, provided by the concerned local government units, as well as on perceptions of leaders of small- and medium-sized enterprises operating in the cities.

The factors are: Cost of doing business; links to major urban and growth centers; dynamism of the local economy; human resource and training; adequacy and quality of infrastructure; responsiveness of local governance; and quality of life in the cities.

Macaranas said the awardees were cited en masse, not by rank, to foster healthy competition.

Five of the cities cited for their viability were Davao, Las Piñas, Makati, Marikina and Muntinlupa.

The mid-sized cities, with populations of more than 200,000, named were Bacolod, Iligan, Iloilo, and San Fernando in Pampanga.

Small cities or those with populations of less than 200,000, include Dagupan, Koronadal, Legaspi, Naga, Olongapo, San Fernando in La Union, Sta. Rosa, Surigao, Tagbilaran and Tagum.

"This project is aimed at (encouraging) local leaders to embrace decentralization, become development and economic managers, and not depend on budget allocations from the national government," Macaranas said.

Telcos ordered to resolve access charges dispute

By Clarissa S. Batino

PHILIPPINE MOBILE CARRIERS HAVE FAILED to resolve their dispute on interconnection fees, prompting the National Telecommunications Commission (NTC) to compel the telcos to arrive at a compromise in the coming weeks.

NTC chair Ronald Solis said the telcos failed to settle their differences amicably during a meeting with the regulator yesterday. If problems persist, then the regulator would have to treat the ongoing row on access charges as an administrative case.

Still, Solis said that the commission would not interfere on the access charge dispute unless the fees that the telcos would charge one another threaten the viability of other operators.

"Access rates are market driven," Solis said. "The law says we can only come in and set the rates if the carriers resort to ruinous or cutthroat competition. Otherwise, we let them be."

Access charges or termination rates are paid by the phone company that makes the call. The rates are determined bilaterally.

The telco regulator met yesterday with representatives of Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. and its wireless unit Smart Communications Inc., Globe Telecom Inc., and Digital Telecommunications Phils. Inc.

Solis directed Globe and PLDT to submit their "compromise" proposals. He added that the NTC would evaluate whether the proposed rates of PLDT and Globe are reasonable.

Since PLDT is the bigger player, the bulk of the local traffic ends on its network. Thus, it stands to benefit from higher access charges. In terms of traffic coming from the United States, the Philippines gets the fourth largest volume. PLDT and Globe earn a lot from these inbound calls.

Treasury bill . . .

From page B1

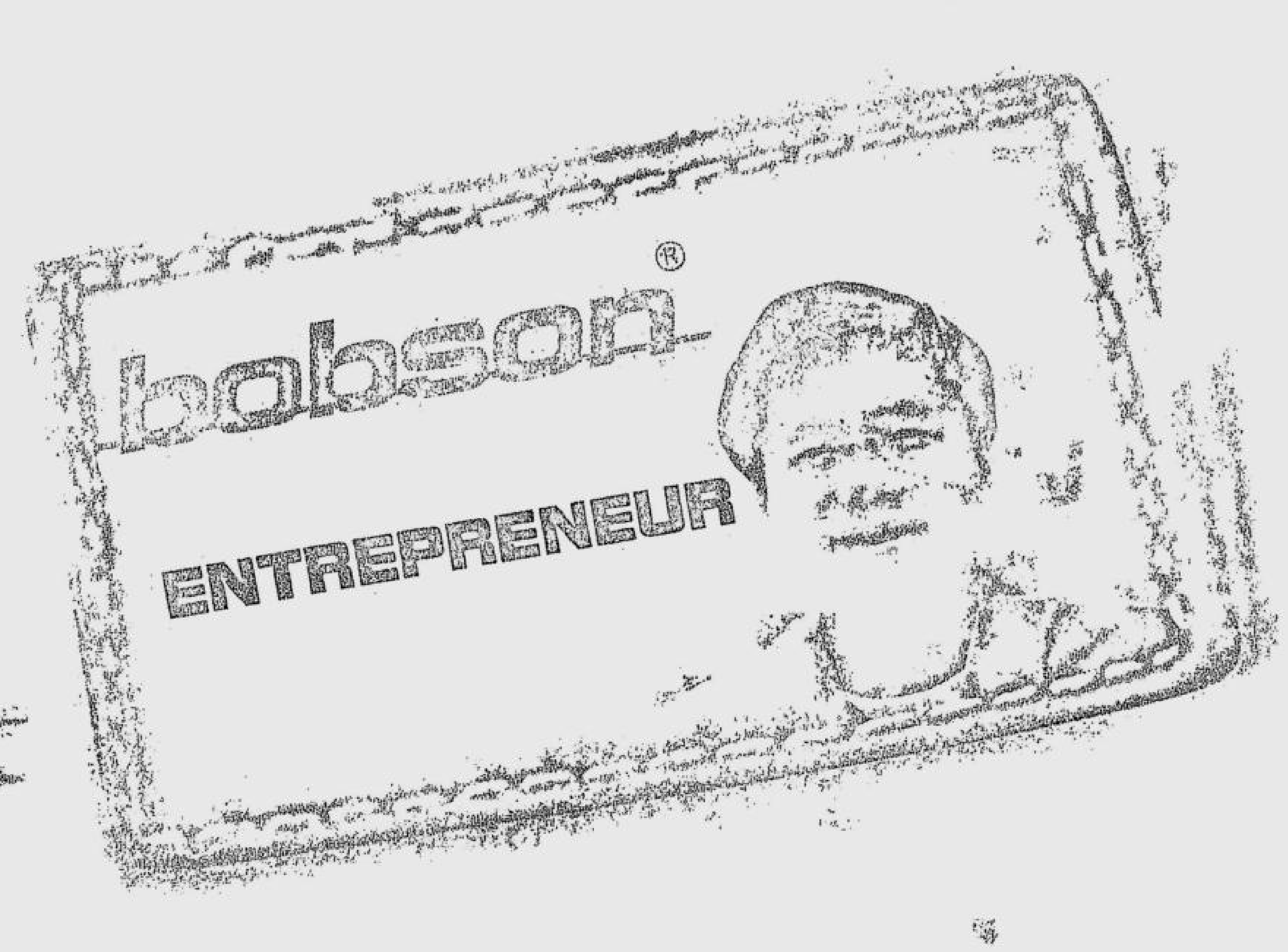
lion, also much higher than the government's offering of P1.5 billion.

Credit-rating agency FitchRatings yesterday announced that it revised its outlook on the Philippines from "negative" to "stable," citing improvements in the government's fiscal position and easing political tension. *(See story on Page 1.)*

The change in outlook followed the government's attainment of a better-than-expected fiscal performance for 2005. The budget deficit last year stood at P146.5 billion, or lower than the official ceiling of P180 billion set by the government.

Fitch noted that political noise has eased compared with last year's, although adding that there might be renewed uncertainty in the political environment because of the possibility that impeachment proceedings against President Macapagal-Arroyo might be revived this year.

Last week, S&P made a similar move of changing its outlook on the Philippines from "negative" to "stable."



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"Marami akong pinagdaanang pagsubok bago ko napaunlad ang Bobson. Dahil mahirap lang kami, kinailangan kong pag-aralin ang sarili ko sa college kaya namasukan ako sa iba't-ibang trabaho. Nagtinda ako ng damit sa Divisoria, nagtutor, nagbebenta ako dati ng t-shirts tuwing Pasko, naging salesman sa isang hardware store, nakapagtrabaho din sa isang garments manufacturing firm at naging supervisor din ako sa isang furniture manufacturing business. Nung na-realize ko naman na gusto ko nang mag-negosyo, hindi ko naman alam kung paano magsimula. Swerte kayo mayroon nang Go Negosyo Entrepreneurship Expo na tutulong sa mga gustong mag-business! Kung mayroon nang Go Negosyo, hindi na sana ako nahirapang itayo ang Bobson.

Kaya halina kayo! Huwag palampasin ang pagkakataong ito na matuto, magtayo at paunlarin ang inyong sariling negosyo. Punta na kayo sa Go Negosyo Entrepreneurship Summit at Expo!"

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DAY 1 (February 23, 2006/ 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.)
PCE Recognition of Outstanding Entrepreneurship Teachers / Students / Programs by PCE • FORUM 1: Building National Confidence and Optimism To Inspire More Successful Filipino Entrepreneurs - Moderators: Rico Hizon & Anna Marie Periquet - Panelists: Socorro Ramos, Hon. Jose Concepcion III, Dr. Rolando Hortaleza, Atty. Felipe Gozon, Vivienne Tan, Henry Lim Bon Liong, Rodrigo Rivera, Marixi Prieto*, Grace Glory Go • LUNCH BREAK TOPIC: Feng Shui Master Charlie Chao's Business Outlook • FORUM 2: A Global Market Beckons The Filipino Entrepreneur - Panelists: Dennis Mendiola, Dr. Paco Sandejas, Guillermo Luchangco, Ben Colayco, Menardo Jimenez Jr. • FORUM 3: Uncommon Heroes for the Common Good - Panelists:Dr. Justin Arboleda, Francisco Colayco, Ray Gapuz Jr., Rina Lopez-Bautista*, Dylan Wilk, Gerry Geronimo* • Breeding The Entrepreneurial Mindset and Culture By Raju Mandhyan • FORUM 4: New Approaches in Entrepreneurship Education • CULMINATING FORUM: Triggering the Age of Entrepreneurship in the Philippines - Panelists:Sec. Arthur Yap, Sec. Estrella Alabastro, Chairman Carlito Puno, OIC/Secretary Fe Hidalgo, Undersecretary Zorayda Amelia Alonzo, Executive Director Gondelina Amata, Gov. Luis Raymund F. Villafuerte*, Linda Wirth*, Johnlu Koa, Prof. Josephine Aguilar

DAY 2 (February 24, 2006/ 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.)
Opening Ceremonies Cutting of Ribbon:VP Noli de Castro, Sen.Manuel Villar, Sen. Manuel Roxas II,Sen. Ramon Magsaysay Jr.,Sen. Francis Pangilinan, Cong.Wilhelmino Alvarado, Mayor Rosendo Capco, Mayor Freddie Tinga, Government Officials, Partner Organizations • International Workshop on Technopreneurship - Conducted by: Prof. Patrick Chan - HOST: DOST • Business Plan Competition Brief: PCE/PESO, CFBC, ENEDA, JCI, HSBC, TIES, ONIA, GEN-P • Easy Tips on How to Start a Retail Business and How to Supply to Retailers - By: Steven T. Cua • "Elevator Pitch" Exhibition by Business Plan Contest Winners & Runners-up • Funding Options for Outstanding Business Plans • Easy on the pocket Business Ideas By: Food Cart Association of the Philippines • Awarding of PCE-ENEDA Cup Winners • GO NEGOSYO Concert with Orange and Lemons at the Central Plaza, Market! Market!

DAY 3 (February 25, 2006/ 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.)
The Franchise Boom: Now is the Time to Get Started By: Association of Filipino Franchisers Inc. • International Workshop on Technopreneurship - Conducted by: Prof. Patrick Chan - HOST: DOST • Franchise Your Business An Option for Growth - By: Philippine Franchise Association • The Entrepreneur: Know Thyself - By: Lex Ledesma • Finding Your Opportunity of a Lifetime: Where do Entrepreneurs Get Their Ideas - By: Jay Bernardo • Moving Innovations to Market - By: Maoi Arroyo • The Essentials of a Successful Business Start-up - By: Joel Santos • FORUM: Financing Programs that Work - Moderator: Mau Bolante - Panelists: National Livelihood Support Fund, Personal Bank Loan providers, ABS-CBN Bayan Microfinance Foundation, Pawnshops, Cooperatives • Safeguarding and Optimizing Your Intellectual Capital - By: Intellectual Property Office

*final list of speakers for confirmation

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No more IPO auctions please

MR. BEARBULL

Ron Nathan

TODAY IS NOT ONLY VALENTINE'S Day but also our 10th wedding anniversary. I decided that was a good day to get married because I would only have to take my wife out once a year instead of twice. Also, all the expensive restaurants are fully booked so we usually end up in a fast food. This year, we are going to the Greasy Spoon, all you can eat for P35.

We got married in a registry office, after which we were taken into a room where a middle-aged lady gave us a book called "Family planning in the 90s," (it was 1996). I told her that when I reached 90, I would not need any family planning. She was not amused.

I usually answer e-mails, but two did not contain return addresses, so I will answer them here.

"My husband has lost so much money in IPOs that he has become IPO-sensitive and is very depressed. Is there a home for such people?" Yes, madam put him in an IPOd.

"Dear Mr. Bearbull, is it safe to have a baby after 35?" Well, I am not a doctor but I would have thought that after having 35, you should quit.

I have an umbrella in my office, and I call it Adam because one of its ribs is missing.

What is the difference between a Xerox machine and bird flu? One makes facsimiles; the other makes sick families.

A man woke up after an operation and told the surgeon, "I can't feel my legs." The surgeon replied, That is because we have cut off your arms."

* * * *

I realize that my articles are much longer than other columnists, so the first two parts of "How to be a better investor-Part II" were splattered over two pages while the third was relegated to the back page. I received 43 e-mails from readers asking what happened to the last part, as they did not see it in the inside page. I sent it to all of them with an apology, but it is not the editor's fault. Advertisements take priority because they are revenue producing. In the future, I will reduce my articles by one-third, and if necessary by one-half.

The series, which I update and revise annually, attracted a lot of attention, and I received up to 50 e-mails a day from readers. I answered them all briefly, as I only type with one finger. It is a pity there is no course on the stock market, but the PSE had a seminar last week to get the interest of investors and I hope they will continue to do this.

While writing this series, I temporarily ignored the rest of the market, but if First Gen had looked attractive, I would have mentioned it. Once the underwriters sliced off the top half of the range from P51-P74 down to P51 - P63, it was obvious that the "enormous amount of foreign interest" did not exist. So I told readers in my newsletter to forget about the issue altogether.

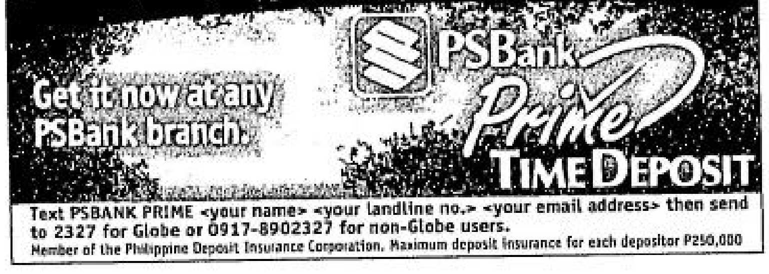
I was shocked when the underwriters announced a further reduction in the price to P47 because they receive an underwriting commission which runs into millions of dollars in exchange for which they guarantee to take up any unwanted shares at the minimum price of P51. I have never heard of underwriters reneging on their commitment before, but they must have put pressure of FPH to agree.

The shares went to an immediate discount, closing P1.50 lower at P45.50. This is the 4th IPO to go to a discount, though SCC went initially to a large premium, and fell only when the company announced it would miss its profits forecast. I think investors are now wary of this type of auction and rightly so.

When the Conservative government denationalized the steel industry, there were a number of new issues, all at a fixed price, and every one went to a premium and stayed above the issue price for the next two years. I wrote about this a couple of months ago. After a long period of successful, heavily oversubscribed new issues and happy investors, the issuing houses switched to a Dutch auction. A range was fixed and you could put in multiple bids. For example, if the range was 5-6 pounds, you could apply for 10,000 shares at 6; 50,000 at 5.50 and 100,000 at 5. The issuing house would start at the top and work their way down until the issue was fully subscribed.

If it was, then a cut-off point was reached at say 5.40, and anyone who bid above that price was allotted shares at 5.40 even if they bid 6. Anyone below was cut out. Alas, the system did not work and nobody bothered to apply. If speculators could not see a profit on the first day, they ignored it. After the auction flopped three times in a row, it was eventually abandoned. I hope the PSE, in the future, will discourage this type of issue. Maybe it works in the US, but we are very much smaller and less sophisticated. Let us revert to fixed price issues.

The dividend season starts in earnest this week, and already we have a 34-percent increase from RLC, a 52% increase from SECB and a 51-percent increase from MWC. Most companies are expected to post higher profits for last year yet the market remains lifeless. *mrbearbull@hotmail.com*



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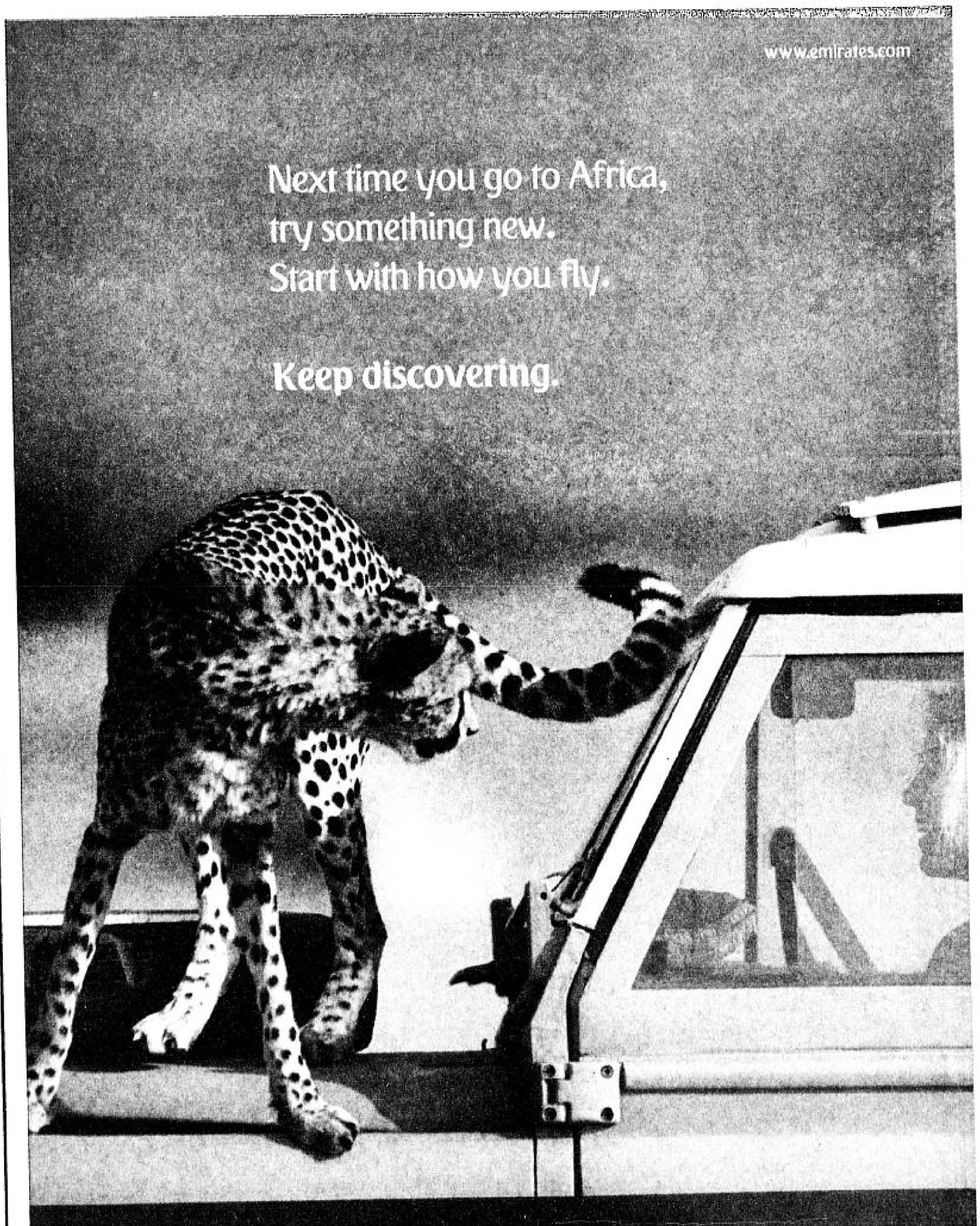

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Republic of the Philippines
ZAMBOANGA CITY WATER DISTRICT
Pilar Street, Zamboanga City

SECTION I. INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

Brief Description of Goods: LOT 1: PVC PIPES & FITTINGS, PE & HDPE PIPES
LOT 2: PNEUMATIC BREAKER
LOT 3: 1/2" WATER METER
LOT 4: 55 KVA Rated Continuo's Power Generating Set

The ZAMBOANGA CITY WATER DISTRICT, through its *internally generated funds* intend to apply the sum of for LOT 1: P1,396,060.00, LOT 2: P 150,000.00, LOT 3: P 350,000.00, LOT 4: P1,300,000.00 being the Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC) to payments under ZCWD *Purchase Requisition Nos. 8697, 8806, 8692, 8783, 8782 & 8788*. Bids received in excess of the ABC shall be automatically rejected at Bid Opening.

The ZAMBOANGA CITY WATER DISTRICT now invites sealed bids from eligible Bidders for the supply/delivery of *PVC Pipes & Fittings, PE & HDPE Pipes, Pneumatic Breaker, 1/2' Water Meter and 55 KVA Rated Genset*. Delivery of GOODS is required by *for Lot 1: April 18, 2006, Lot 2: March 15, 2006, Lot 3 & 4: March 26, 2006*. The description of an eligible bidder is contained in Section II of the Bidding Documents, ITB.

Bidding will be conducted through open competitive bidding procedures using non-discretionary pass/fail criteria as specified in the Implementing Rules & Regulations Part A (IRR-A) of Republic Act 9184 (R.A. 9184), otherwise known as the Government Procurement Reform Act, and is restricted to organizations with at least sixty percent (60%) interest or outstanding capital stock belonging to citizens of the Philippines, as specified in Republic Act 5183 (R.A. 5183). Only Bids from Bidders who pass the eligibility check will be opened. The process of the Eligibility check is described in Section II of the Bidding Documents, ITB. The bidder with lowest calculated bid (LCB) shall be advance to the post-qualification stage in order to finally determine its responsiveness to the technical and financial requirements of the project. The contract shall be then awarded to the Lowest Calculated and Responsive Bidder (LCRB) who was determined as such during the post-qualification procedure.

Interested Bidders may obtain further information from the ZAMBOANGA CITY WATER DISTRICT and inspect the Bidding documents at the address given below during office hours (8:00-5:00 p.m.)

A complete set of Bidding Documents may be purchased by interested bidders from the address below and upon payment of a non-refundable fee in the amount for LOT 1 & 4: P1,000.00/ Lot (One Thousand Pesos/Lot), LOT 2 & 3: P500.00/lot (Five Hundred Pesos/Lot). The methods of payment will either be thru Cash, Certified Check or Cashier's Check only. The bidding documents shall be received personally by the prospective Bidder or his authorized representative. Issuance of Bid Documents will be on February 7 to 15, 2006. After these dates the BAC Secretariat will no longer issue Bid Documents.

The ZAMBOANGA CITY WATER DISTRICT will hold a Pre-Bid Conference open to all interested parties on February 16, 2006 at 2:00 p.m. at this address:

2nd Floor ZAMBOANGA CITY WATER DISTRICT Main Office Building
Pilar Street, Zamboanga City

Bids and eligibility requirements must be delivered to the address below at or before 2:00 p.m., February 23, 2006. All bids must be accompanied by a Bid Security in the form of Cash, Certified check or Cashier's Check and in the amount of P6,793.80. Late Bids shall not be accepted.

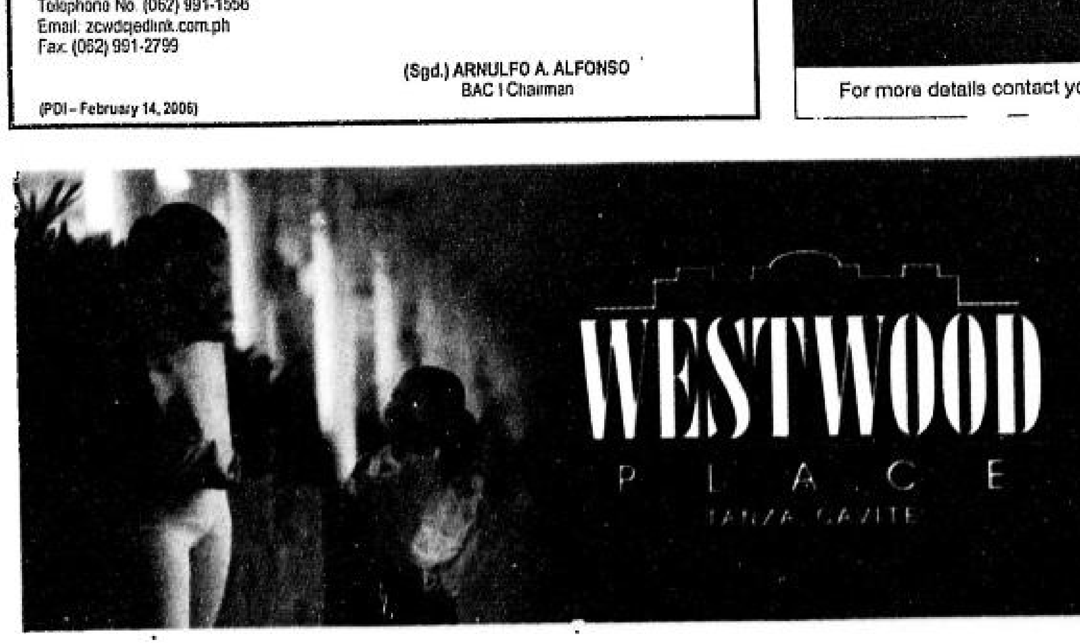
Bid Opening shall be on February 23, 2006 at the 2nd Floor, ZAMBOANGA CITY WATER DISTRICT Main Office Building, Pilar St., Zamboanga City. Bids will be opened in the presence of the Bidder's representative's who choose to attend at the address below.

The ZAMBOANGA CITY WATER DISTRICT reserves the right to accept or reject any Bid, and to annul the bidding process and reject all Bids at any time or prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected Bidder or Bidders.

ZAMBOANGA CITY WATER DISTRICT
Mr. Noel M. Kawaguchi
Pilar St., Zamboanga City 7000
Telephone No. (062) 991-1556
Email: zcwdqedlink.com.ph
Fax: (062) 991-2799

(Sgd.) ARNULFO A. ALFONSO
BAC I Chairman

(PDI – February 14, 2006)



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PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

(As of February 13, 2006)

STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
		FINANCIAL			
		BANKS			
Asiatrust Dev. Bank Inc.	3.35	3.35	3.35	3.35	12,000
Banco de Oro Univ. Bank	35.5	36	35	35.5	2,331,200
Bank of the Phil. Islands	58.5	59	58.5	58.5	1,800,500
China Banking Corp.	610	620	610	620	1,170
Citystate Savings Bank	19	19	19	19	300
Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	62.5	62.5	62.5	62.5	46,400
International Exch. Bank	21.75	22	21.75	22	112,800
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	31.5	32.5	31.5	32.5	1,543,000
Phil. Bank of Comm. A	65	65	65	65	400
Philippine National Bank	30.5	30.5	30.5	30.5	19,900
Phil. Savings Bank	35	35	35	35	500
Security Bank Corp.	39	39	39	39	31,300
Union Bank of the Phil.	34.5	34.5	34.5	34.5	8,500
		OTHER FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS			
Manulife Financial Corp.	3200	3210	3200	3210	1,110
Phil. Stock Exchange Inc.	145	146	126	146	90,000
Sun Life Financial Inc.	2175	2175	2175	2175	800
Ivantage Corp.	0.69	0.69	0.69	0.69	250,000
		INDUSTRIAL			
		ELECTRICITY, ENERGY, POWER & WATER			
First Gen Corp.	46	46.5	46	46	2,230,100
First Phil Hldgs Corp.	43.5	44.5	43.5	44	92,600
Manila Electric Co. A	13.75	13.75	13.75	13.75	39,500
Manila Electric Co. B	20.25	20.25	20	20	28,900
Manila Water Co. Inc.	6.3	6.3	6.3	6.3	6,108,000
Petron Corp.	4.55	4.7	4.55	4.65	2,544,000
Trans-Asia Oil and Energy	0.93	0.94	0.93	0.94	130,000
		FOOD, BEVERAGE & TOBACCO			
Alaska Milk Corp.	3.6	3.6	3.6	3.6	7,000
Ginebra San Miguel Inc.	20.75	20.75	20.75	20.75	20,700
Jollibee Foods Corp.	35	35.5	34	35	312,400
Roxas Holdings Inc.	1.72	1.72	1.72	1.72	10,000
San Miguel Corp. A	61.5	62	61.5	62	96,800
San Miguel Corp. B	84	84	84	84	94,000
Tanduay Holdings Inc	3	3	3	3	10,000
Vitarich Corp.	0.29	0.29	0.29	0.29	740,000
		CONSTRUCTION, INFRASTRUCTURE & ALLIED SERVICES			
Southeast Asian Cement	0.34	0.34	0.33	0.34	1,930,000
Engineering Equip. Inc.	1.24	1.24	1.2	1.22	3,750,000
Fortune Cement Corp.	0.79	0.8	0.79	0.8	40,000
Holcim Philippines Inc.	4.3	4.35	4.3	4.35	866,000
		DIVERSIFIED INDUSTRIALS			
Global Equities Inc.	0.075	0.075	0.075	0.075	1,000,000
Steniel Manufacturing	0.17	0.17	0.17	0.17	90,000
		HOLDING FIRMS			
Abacus Con Res & Hdg A	0.008	0.0085	0.008	0.0085	11,000,000
Ayala Corp.	327.5	335	327.5	335	17,940
Aboitiz Equity Ventures	4.95	4.95	4.95	4.95	400,000
Ajo.Net Holdings Inc.	0.023	0.023	0.023	0.023	1,000,000
A. Soriano Corp.	2.26	2.28	2.26	2.28	2,665,000
Alcorn Gold Res. Corp.	0.007	0.007	0.007	0.007	65,000,000
Anglo Phil Holdings Corp.	0.88	0.89	0.88	0.89	550,000
ATN Holdings Inc.	1.98	2	1.88	1.88	267,000
Benpres Holdings Corp.	1	1	0.99	0.99	13,459,000
DMCI Holdings Inc.	3.1	3.1	3.05	3.05	253,000
Filinvest Dev. Corp.	1.3	1.36	1.3	1.36	1,587,000
J.G. Summit Holdings Inc.	4.45	4.5	4.45	4.5	966,000
Mabuhay Holdings Corp.	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	300,000
Magnum Holdings Inc.	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.6	10,000
Pacifica	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01	15,000,000
Prime Orion Phils. Inc.	0.235	0.235	0.235	0.235	900,000
Prime Media Holdings Inc.	1.06	1.12	1.06	1.12	16,000
Sinophil Corp.	0.13	0.135	0.13	0.135	140,000
SM Investments Corp.	220	223	220	223	24,030
Seafront Resources Corp.	0.36	0.4	0.36	0.4	500,000
Uniol Res. & Holdings Co.	0.0625	0.0625	0.0625	0.0625	1,100,000
Wellex Industries Inc.	0.135	0.135	0.135	0.135	730,000
		PROPERTY			
Ayala Land Inc.	10.5	10.75	10.5	10.75	8,482,800
Belle Corp.	1.02	1.02	1	1	250,000
Crown Equities Inc.	0.235	0.235	0.23	0.23	1,990,000
Cebu Holdings Inc.	1.56	1.6	1.52	1.54	1,305,000
Cebu Prop. Vent B	0.85	0.85	0.85	0.85	20,000
Cyber Bay Corp.	0.22	0.22	0.22	0.22	300,000
EIB Realty Developers Inc.	0.22	0.22	0.22	0.22	10,000
Empire East Land Inc.	0.45	0.45	0.45	0.45	5,180,000
Ever-Gotesco Resources	0.025	0.025	0.025	0.025	1,000,000
Fairmont Holdings Inc	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.7	100,000
Filinvest Land Inc.	1.52	1.52	1.5	1.5	2,200,000
Interport Res. B	0.0046	0.0046	0.0046	0.0046	2,000,000
Kuok Phil. Properties	0.21	0.21	0.205	0.21	970,000
Fil-Estate Land Inc.	0.48	0.48	0.48	0.48	500,000
Megaworld Corp.	1.38	1.4	1.36	1.36	5,324,000
Metro Pacific Corp.	0.33	0.34	0.33	0.34	1,770,000
MRC Allied Ind. Inc.	0.17	0.185	0.17	0.18	8,200,000
Philippine Estates Corp.	0.14	0.14	0.14	0.14	590,000
Robinsons Land Corp.	6	6	6	6	41,000
Phil Realty and Holdings	0.19	0.215	0.19	0.215	14,210,000
SM Prime Holdings Inc.	8	8.1	7.9	8.1	1,407,000
Uniwide Holdings Inc.	0.135	0.14	0.135	0.135	4,780,000
		MEDIA			
ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.	10.75	11	10.75	11	54,000
		TELECOMMUNICATIONS			
Digital Telecom Phils Inc.	0.88	0.88	0.88	0.88	980,000
Globe Telecom Inc.	750	750	750	750	57,470
Pilipino Tel. Corp.	3.15	3.2	3.1	3.2	850,000
Phil. Long Dis Tel Co.	1755	1765	1745	1745	190,790
		INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY			
Boulevard Holdings Inc.	0.17	0.17	0.17	0.17	20,000
Ionics Inc.	1.3	1.3	1.3	1.3	10,000
ISM Communications Corp.	0.055	0.055	0.055	0.055	2,400,000
Philweb Corp.	0.029	0.029	0.029	0.029	246,700,000
		TRANSPORTATION SERVICES			
Asian Terminals Inc.	1.88	1.88	1.88	1.88	5,000,000
Aboitiz Trans. Sys. Corp.	1.66	1.66	1.66	1.66	225,000
Int'l Container Term'l Sv	11.5	11.5	11.5	11.5	288,600
Keppel Phils. Marine Inc.	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.8	50,000
Lorenzo Shipping Corp.	1.26	1.26	1.26	1.26	2,000
		HOTEL & LEISURE			
Leisure & Resorts Corp.	1.74	1.74	1.72	1.72	2,014,000
Premiere Ent. Prod. Inc.	0.29	0.29	0.29	0.29	50,000
		DIVERSIFIED SERVICES			
Paxys Inc.	7.6	7.8	7.6	7.7	1,040,000
		MINING			
Apex Mining Co. Inc. A	1.08	1.08	1.04	1.04	429,000
Apex Mining Co. Inc. B	1.38	1.38	1.3	1.34	146,000
Abra Mining & Industrial	0.007	0.007	0.007	0.007	3,000,000
Atlas Cons. Min & Dev't	6	6	6	6	254,000
Lepanto Cons Mng. Co. A	0.225	0.225	0.225	0.225	3,220,000
Lepanto Cons. Mng. Co. B	0.27	0.28	0.27	0.27	3,080,000
Manila Mining Corp. A	0.018	0.018	0.017	0.018	13,300,000
Manila Mining Corp. B	0.026	0.026	0.026	0.026	5,000,000
Omico Corp.	0.0055	0.0055	0.0055	0.0055	96,000,000
Philex Mining Corp. A	1.7	1.72	1.68	1.72	4,839,000
Philex Mining Corp. B	1.94	1.96	1.9	1.92	5,412,000
Semirara Mining Corp.	27.5	28	27.5	28	356,800
United Paragon Mining Co.	0.28	0.28	0.28	0.28	200,000
Vulcan Ind'l	0.34	0.34	0.34	0.34	10,000
		OIL			
Oriental Pet. & Min. B	0.0085	0.0085	0.0085	0.0085	10,000,000
The Philodrill Corp. A	0.45	0.45	0.45	0.45	500,000
The Philodrill Corp. B	0.48	0.48	0.48	0.48	290,000
Petroenergy Res. Corp.	4	4	4	4	18,000
		PREFERRED			
PLDT (10% Pref.) Series U	10.75	10.75	10.75	10.75	300
		WARRANTS, PHIL. DEPOSIT RECEIPTS, ETC.			
ABS-CBN Hldgs. Corp. (PDR)	10.5	10.75	10.5	10.75	132,000

Yuchengco retires; daughter Helen is successor

From page B1

business for over 75 years, making non-life insurer Malayan Insurance the undisputed leader in the industry today.

Yuchengco said that despite his retirement, he will keep his office at RCBC Plaza to stay up close to major developments in YGC and in the country's affairs.

A certified public accountant and once an accounting professor, Yuchengco has earned the respect of his employees and business partners for his fastidiousness and attention to detail, knowing very well how "small things can unmake great plans."

On top of his numerous achievements in business, he is one of the few who has had a distinguished career in government service. He has served as ambassador to China and to Japan and as the Philippine Permanent Representative to the United Nations. He has also been a trusted adviser to several Filipino presidents. He currently serves as presidential adviser for Foreign Affairs with a Cabinet rank under the Arroyo administration.

MORE EFFICIENT

MWC profit up 51%

By Christine A. Gaylican

AYALA-LED MANILA WATER CO. reported a 51-percent increase in its net income last year to P2.01 billion from year-ago level.

Company officials said the improvement could be attributed to better operational efficiency and service improvements.

In an investors briefing, MWCI president Antonino T. Aquino said the company's financial performance was backed by strong operational gains and an 8-percent reduction in systems losses, also known as non-revenue water.

"The reduction in our NRW allowed us to provide water to additional 45,167 households and to improve service to existing 5 million customers," Aquino said.

The NRW reduction resulted in additional billed volume of 39 million liters per day (MLD) jacking up MWCI's water delivery to 864 MLD as of December 2005, Aquino said. MWCI now serves more than 600,000 households, 95 percent of which are now enjoying 24-hour water service.

According to MWCI chief finance officer Sherisa Nuesa, company revenue grew by 35 percent to P5.68 billion. Earnings before interest, taxes, depreciation and amortization (Ebitda) went up by 46 percent to P2.96 billion, reflecting strong operating cash flows, Nuesa added.

MWCI intends to sustain its growth momentum in 2006 and beyond with a P4.6-billion capital investment program that is aimed at reaching customers in high-level areas such as Taguig, Antipolo, Taytay, Cainta, San Mateo, Montalban, Angono, Binangonan, Baras and Jala-jala.

CURRENCIES

February 13, 2006 Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Dollar Equivalent	Peso Equivalent
United States	Dollar	0.840336	1.000000	51.4990
Japan	Yen	0.007129	0.008484	0.4369
United Kingdom	Pound	1.466050	1.744600	89.8452
Hong Kong	Dollar	0.108309	0.128888	6.6376
Switzerland	Franc	0.642704	0.764818	39.3874
Canada	Dollar	0.729079	0.867604	44.6807
Singapore	Dollar	0.516653	0.614817	31.6625
Australia	Dollar	0.620495	0.738389	38.0263
Bahrain	Dinar*	2.229600	2.653224	136.6384
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.224071	0.266645	13.7320
Brunei	Dollar	0.515070	0.612933	31.5654
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000091	0.000108	0.0056
Thailand	Baht	0.021415	0.025484	1.3124
UAE	Dirham	0.228800	0.272272	14.0217
Euro	Euro	1.000000	1.190000	61.2838
Brazil	Real	0.388955	0.462856	23.8366
Denmark	Kroner	0.133970	0.159424	8.2102
India	Rupee	0.019064	0.022686	1.1683
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.225715	0.268601	13.8327
Mexico	New Peso	0.079960	0.095152	4.9002
New Zealand	Dollar	0.569835	0.678104	34.9217
South Africa	Rand	0.137760	0.163934	8.4424
Korea	Won	0.000869	0.001034	0.0532
Taiwan	Nt Dollar	0.026084	0.031040	1.5985

WESTERN VISAYAS MEDICAL CENTER
Mandurriao, Iloilo City
Fax No. 321-17-97
E-mail address: wvmc@mozcom.com

Project Reference Number 06-001

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The DOH-Western Visayas Medical Center through its Bids and Awards Committee (BAC), invites suppliers/manufacturers/distributors/contractors to apply for eligibility and to bid for the hereunder project.

Name of Project: Bidding of Hospital Supplies and Materials
Location: Western Visayas Medical Center

Brief Description

Description	Unit Price	ABC Total Price
Procurement of Hospital Supplies and Materials		Php 14,542,100.00

Approved Budget for the Contract : Php 14,542,100.00
Contract Duration : One Year
Delivery Period : Within 15 days after acceptance of Purchase Order

Prospective bidders should have experience in undertaking a similar project within the last two years with an amount of at least 50% of the proposed project for bidding. The Eligibility Check/Screening as well as the Preliminary Examination of Bids shall, use non-discretionary "pass/fail" criteria. Post-qualification of the lowest calculated bid shall be conducted.

All particulars relative to Eligibility Statement and Screening, Bid Security, Performance Security, Pre-bidding Conference, Evaluation of Bids, Post-Qualification and Award of Contract shall be governed by the pertinent provisions of R.A. 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulation (IRR)

The complete schedule of activities is listed, as follows:

Activities	Schedule
1. Issuance of Bid Documents	February 1 – February 16, 2006
2. Pre-bid Conference	February 10, 2006 Friday
3. Submission of Letters of Intent and Application for Eligibility (if single-stage bidding is used, delete this activity)	
4. Opening of Bids	February 28, 2006 Tuesday
5. Bid Evaluation	March 1 – March 15, 2006
6. Post-qualification	March 16 – March 22, 2006
7. Notice of Award	March 28, 2006

Bid Documents will be available only to prospective bidders upon payment of a non-refundable amount of Php 2,500.00 to the DOH-Western Visayas Medical Center cashier.

The DOH Western Visayas Medical Center assumes no responsibility whatsoever to compensate or indemnify bidders for any expenses incurred in the preparation of the Bid.

Approved:
(Sgd.) ROMEO P. VARGAS, MD, FPCS
BAC Chairman

(PDI – February 7 & 14, 2006)

PAMPANGA II ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC.
GUAGUA, PAMPANGA

February 10, 2006

INVITATION TO BID

PAMPANGA II ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC. (PELCO II) WITH OFFICE ADDRESS AT SAN ROQUE, GUAGUA, PAMPANGA IS PRESENTLY IN NEED OF INTERESTED ELIGIBLE BIDDERS FOR THE SUPPLY OF SEVENTEEN (17) UNITS SUZUKI VEHICLE (CUSTOMIZED), FOUR (4) UNITS SUZUKI VEHICLE (MULTI CAB) AND FOUR (4) UNITS SUZUKI VEHICLE (4 WHEEL DRIVE).

You are therefore invited to submit your bids/proposals to the PBAC and participate in a sealed bidding on February 23, 2006 (Thursday), 10:00 A.M. at PELCO II Board Room San Roque, Guagua, Pampanga wherein your bid will be opened in your presence or that of your representatives. Late submission and/or incomplete bid documents shall not be accepted.

REQUEST FURTHER TO INCLUDE IN YOUR SEALED BIDS/PROPOSALS ASIDE FROM **THE BID AMOUNT, THE TERMS OF PAYMENT**. THE BID BOND IS EITHER IN THE FORM OF CASH OR MANAGER'S CHECK EQUIVALENT TO TWO AND ONE HALF PERCENT (2.5%) OF THE TOTAL BID PRICE OR SURETY BOND (W/ O.R.) EQUIVALENT TO TEN PERCENT (10%) OF THE TOTAL BID PRICE. ALL BIDDERS ARE REQUESTED TO BE AT PELCO II BOARD ROOM AT EXACTLY 10:00 A.M. TO SECURE BID DOCUMENTS (FOR PROPER SPECIFICATION OF VEHICLES), ACCREDITATION AND FURTHER CLARIFICATION PLEASE CONTACT OR VISIT PBAC CHAIRPERSON MS. ANA LEA N. NARCISO, TEL. NO. (045) 900-0611 OR MR. NEIL S. ISIP (045) 901-0864-65.

LATE SUBMISSION OF BIDS WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED. THE PBAC HAS THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY OR ALL BIDS THAT DO NOT COMPLY WITH THE REQUIREMENTS, WAIVE ANY INFORMALITY IN THE PROPOSAL RECEIVED AND TO ACCEPT SUCH MOST ADVANTAGEOUS TO THE COOPERATIVE.

(Sgd.) ANA LEA N. NARCISO
PBAC Chairperson

(PDI – February 14 & 15, 2006)

NOTICE OF SEARCH FOR
TIBURCIO TANCINCO MEMORIAL INSTITUTE OF SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY
PRESIDENCY

Minimum Personal Qualifications:

1. Must be a Filipino citizen
2. Must have earned a Doctoral Degree
3. Preferably at least thirty five (35) years old but not more than sixty (60) years old at the time of application.
4. Must be morally upright, with no administrative and criminal conviction.
5. With recognized leadership in his/her profession in the academe or industry
6. Must have a proven track record as top administrator (at least managerial/professorial level), whether in public or private, for at least a period of five (5) years. This must be supported by a document (e.g. Certification or Special Order from the concerned party) stating the managerial, professional and/or administrative experience and the period covered.
7. Must possess leadership and managerial skills within the purview of the needs, thrusts, goals and objectives of the college.

Note: Qualified applicants are requested to submit the following:

1. Formal Application Letter addressed to:
   Honorable Chair of the Board of Trustees
   Tiburcio Tancinco Memorial Institute of Science and Technology
   Calbayog City
   Attention The Secretariat
   Search Committee for Presidency
2. Detailed Curriculum Vitaé and authenticated supporting documents
3. Applicant's Proposed Vision, Mission and Development Plan of the College within a four-year period
4. Neuro-psychiatric Examination Result accomplished by a competent physician
5. Medical Certificate of Physical Fitness issued by a government physician from a regional medical center.
6. Authenticated Clearance Certification from the following:
   a. Ombudsman or Sandiganbayan
   b. Civil Service Commission
   c. National Bureau of Investigation
   d. Present Employer

Important: Interested applicants must send the above-mentioned documentary requirements in seven (7) sets/copies on or before March 20, 2006 to any of the following

ANTONIO A. SARZATA, JR.
Board Secretary
Tiburcio Tancinco Memorial Institute
of Science and Technology
Calbayog City, Samar

Office of Commissioner Nona S. Ricafort
Commission on Higher Education
DAP Bldg., Ortigas Center
San Miguel Avenue, Pasig City

DR. MARIA RITA CASTILLON-ORTIZ, Ed.D.
Officer-in-Charge/Chair of the Search Committee
Commission on Higher Education Region VIII
Tacloban City 6500

Supervisory Leadership Development

February 24, 2006, 1:00 p.m. - 5:00 p. m., Holiday Inn Galleria

The productive or anemic performance of your people and your business depends largely on your supervisors. If they can effectively guide, control and motivate the people, the desired result will be achieved. Unfortunately, supervision is anything but easy. In fact, what often happens is that when a productive worker is promoted to a supervisory position, the company loses an effective worker and gains a poor supervisor. This is known as the Peter Principle and this is largely attributable to lack of fundamental skills and attitude training in supervision. Lack of training is a sure-fire formula for failure. This powerful program is designed to equip and empower the Supervisors by providing them the fundamental and advanced concepts and tools to professionalize their management style and enable them to effectively lead their team.

LEARNING SEED

Session I : Why Some Supervisors Fail
Session II : Becoming a Supervisor
Session III : Some Nuts And Bolts of Supervison
Session IV : Planning and Goal Setting
Session V : Leading Your People
Session VI : How to Motivate for Result

WHO SHOULD ATTEND

- New or recently promoted supervisors with less than three years of formal supervisory experience
- Experienced supervisors or managers reentering the job market and looking to update their resumes
- Informal leaders who have an unofficial supervisory role of leading teams of coworkers or volunteers
- Individuals whose career plans include becoming a supervisor in the near future

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NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT COMPANY

INVITATION TO BID

The NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT COMPANY (NDC) invites interested bidders for the sale of its property with a total land area of 6,277 square meters located along Galfud St., Barangay Soyung, Echague, Isabela on an "as is, where is" basis. The minimum bid is set at P1,269,400.00 inclusive of Value Added Tax (VAT).

Interested parties may register and secure Bidding Guidelines upon payment of P500.00 which is non-refundable beginning February 20, 2006 at:

NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT COMPANY
C/o The Secretariat
Disposal Committee
7th Floor, National Development Company Bldg
116 Tordesillas St., Salcedo Village, Makati City
Direct Line: (02) 840-13-36; (02) 840-11-47;
Trunk Line: (02) 840-48-38 Locals 212, 267 & 269

A pre-bid conference shall be held on March 6, 2006, 9:30 AM at the Alberto Barretto Hall, National Development Company Building.

Bids must be sealed and submitted between 8:00 AM to 2:00 PM of March 10, 2006 labeled and addressed as follows:

The CHAIRMAN
Disposal Committee
National Development Company
7th Floor, NDC Building
116 Tordesillas St., Salcedo Village, Makati City
CODE: Soyung, Echague Property

The opening of sealed bids prepared in the prescribed forms and accompanied by a 10% bid bond is scheduled on March 10 at 2:01 PM at the Alberto Baretto Hall, NDC Building in the presence of all bidder(s) and /or their authorized representatives. Bids received after 2:00 PM shall no longer be accepted.

The NDC Disposal Committee reserves the right to reject any and all bids or to waive any of the formalities required, or accept only such bids which are deemed advantageous to NDC.

Disposal Committee Chairman

(PDI February 13, 14 & 15 2006)

PAMPANGA II ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC.
GUAGUA, PAMPANGA

February 10, 2006

INVITATION TO BID

PAMPANGA II ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC. (PELCO II) WITH OFFICE ADDRESS AT SAN ROQUE, GUAGUA, PAMPANGA IS INVITING FOLLOWING INTERESTED BIDDERS FOR THE SUPPLY AND DELIVERY OF THE FOLLOWING:

Package 1:

1	Conductor, ACSR Duplex #6	—	50,000 Meters
2.	Conductor, ACSR # 1/0	—	10,000 Meters
3.	conductor, Polytheline # 1/0	—	10,000 Meters

Package 2:

1	Pole, Concrete 30' Class 7A	—	50 Pieces
2.	Pole, Concrete 35' Class 7A	—	70 Pieces
3.	Pole, Concrete 40' Class 7A	–	30 Pieces

Package 3:

1.	Transformer, Dist. 25 KVA	(7620/13.2, 120-240v)	—	10 Units
2.	Transformer, Dist. 37.5 KVA	(7620/13.2, 120-240v)	—	10 Units
3.	Transformer, Dist. 50 KVA	(7620/13.2, 120-240v)	–	10 Units

You are therefore invited to submit your bids/proposals to the PBAC and participate in a sealed bidding on February 23, 2006 (Thursday), 11.00 A M at PELCO II Board Room San Roque, Guagua, Pampanga wherein your bid will be opened in your presence or that of your representatives. Late submission and/or incomplete bid documents shall not be accepted

REQUEST FURTHER TO INCLUDE IN YOUR SEALED BIDS/PROPOSALS ASIDE FROM **THE BID AMOUNT, THE TERMS OF PAYMENT**. THE BID BOND IS EITHER IN THE FORM OF CASH OR MANAGER'S CHECK EQUIVALENT TO TWO AND ONE HALF PERCENT (2.5%) OF THE TOTAL BID PRICE OR SURETY BOND (W/ O.R.) EQUIVALENT TO TEN PERCENT (10%) OF THE TOTAL BID PRICE. ALL BIDDERS ARE REQUESTED TO BE AT PELCO II BOARD ROOM AT EXACTLY 11.00 A M TO SECURE BID DOCUMENTS AND FURTHER CLARIFICATION PLEASE CONTACT OR VISIT PBAC CHAIRPERSON MS. ANA LEA N. NARCISO, TEL. NO (045) 900-0611 OR MR NEIL S. ISIP (045) 901-0864-65.

PLEASE BE INFORMED TO SUBMIT THREE (3) SEPARAGE BID/PROPOSALS WITH CORRESPONDING BID BONDS FOR PACKAGE 1, PACKAGE 2 & PACKAGE 3 RESPECTIVELY

LATE SUBMISSION OF BIDS WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED. THE PBAC HAS THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY OR ALL BIDS THAT DO NOT COMPLY WITH THE REQUIREMENTS, WAIVE ANY INFORMALITY IN THE PROPOSAL RECEIVED AND TO ACCEPT SUCH MOST ADVANTAGEOUS TO THE COOPERATIVE.

(Sgd.) ANAL LEA N. NARCISO
PBAC Chairperson

(PDI – February 14 & 15, 2006)

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PUBLIC NOTICES

AUCTION SALE

Marilao-Filipinas Pawnshop, M & R Bldg., Tabing-Ilog Marilao, Bulacan. All Unredeemed Pledges of AUGUST 2005 will be Auctioned on FEB. 24, 08:00am.Lanuza & Sons Auctioneer.
(PDI- February 14, 2006)

Invitation to Apply for Eligibility and to Bid

Republic of the Philippines

1. PROPOSED TWO STOREY BUILDING AT GENERAL SANTOS CITY HOSPITAL, GENERAL SANTOS CITY
(Name of Project)

Partial construction of hospital building (payward) on approximately 60% of the total ground area of the project. Work activities includes concrete works, masonry works, plumbing works, electrical works and plastering, floor finishes, interior painting, soil poisoning, carpentry works, steel works and other miscellaneous items.

2. CONSTRUCTION OF LEGISLATIVE BUILDING AT CITY HALL COMPOUND, GSC
(Name of Project)

Partial Construction of 2-storey building; ground floor slab, 2nd floor slab and roof deck slab area approximately 2,312.82 sq.m.; work activities include soil poisoning, demolition of existing structures, excavation works for foundation, structural concrete (Tie Beams, Footings, Beams, Roof Beams, Concrete Slab 1st floor and 2nd floor), stairway and Railings, masonry works and plastering, Steel Trusses and Roofing Works, plumbing works, water lines, electrical works and other miscellaneous items.

The Local Government Unit of General Santos City (LGU-GSC), through the Trust Fund – DOH intends to apply the sum of P9,713,397.59 being the Approved Budget for Contract (ABC) to payments under the contract for the PROPOSED TWO STOREY BUILDING AT GENERAL SANTOS CITY HOSPITAL, GENERAL SANTOS CITY and the 2001 Annual Budget and 2003 Supplemental Budget #3 intends to apply the sum of P20,919,417.01 being the Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC) to payments under the contract for the CONSTRUCTION OF LEGISLATIVE BUILDING AT CITY HALL COMPOUND, GSC. Bids received in excess of the ABC shall be automatically rejected at Bid opening.

The Local Government Unit of General Santos City (LGU-GSC) now calls for the submission of Letters of Intent (LOIs) from potential Bidders to apply for eligibility for the Proposed Two Storey Building at General Santos City Hospital and Construction of Legislative Building at City Hall Compound, all of General Santos City. Bidders should possess a valid PCAB license applicable to the above type and cost of the contract, have completed a similar contract with a value of at least fifty percent (50%) of the ABC, and meet the other minimum eligibility requirements stated in the Eligibility Documents. Interested Bidders must submit their LOIs on or before February 16, 2006, 2:00 PM at Bids and Awards Committee Office, 2nd Floor, Right Wing, City Hall Building, General Santos City and secure the Eligibility Documents therefrom. Applications for eligibility will be evaluated on a "pass/fail" basis. The last day for the submission of the accomplished Eligibility Documents shall be on the date of the opening of Eligibility Documents February 16, 2006, 2:00 PM at Bids and Awards Committee Office, 2nd Floor, Right Wing, City Hall Building, General Santos City. Only those Bidders passing the eligibility check will be entitled to purchase the Bidding Documents.

Bidding will be conducted through open competitive bidding procedures as specified in the Implementing Rules and Regulations Part A (IRR-A) of Republic Act 9184 (R.A. 9184), otherwise known as the "Government Procurement Reform Act," and is restricted, unless otherwise stated, to organizations with at least seventy-five percent (75%) interest or outstanding capital stock belonging to citizens of the Philippines. In accordance with the IRR-A of R.A. 9184, only Bids from eligible Bidders will be opened. In accordance with the IRR-A of R.A. 9184 a contract will only be awarded to the Lowest Calculated and Responsive Bidder who was determined as such during post-qualification.

Interested Bidders shall submit their accomplished Eligibility Documents to the BAC Secretariat at Bids and Awards Committee Office, 2nd Floor, Right Wing, City Hall Building, General Santos City on or before February 16, 2006, 2:00 PM.

Interested Eligible Bidders may obtain further information from the Local Government of General Santos and inspect the Bidding Documents at the address given below from *8:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M.* on February 16 to 28, 2006.

A complete set of Bidding Documents may be purchased by Bidders that passed the eligibility check upon the presentation of the Notice of Eligibility to the BAC Secretariat, at the address below and upon payment of a nonrefundable fee of P4,000.00 for the PROPOSED TWO STOREY BUILDING AT GENERAL SANTOS CITY HOSPITAL and P5,000.00 for the CONSTRUCTION OF LEGISLATIVE BUILDING AT CITY HALL COMPOUND. The Bidding Documents shall be received personally by the bidder or his authorized representative on or before February 24, 2006, 5:00 PM.

The Local Government Unit of General Santos City (LGU-GSC) will hold a Pre-Bid Conference open to all Eligible Bidders on February 28, 2006, 2:00 PM at the following address City Mayor's Conference Room, 2nd Floor, Right Wing, City Hall Building, General Santos City.

Eligible Bidders must submit their Bids at the address below on or before March 14, 2006, 2:00 PM. All Bids must be accompanied by a Bid security in the form of Cash, Certified Check, Cashier's Check, Manager's Check, bank draft or irrevocable letter of credit equivalent to One Percent (1%) of ABC or Bank Guarantee equivalent to One and a half Percent (1½%) of ABC or Surety Bond equivalent to Two and a half Percent of ABC or an equivalent amount in a freely convertible currency. Late Bids shall not be accepted. Bid opening shall be on March 14, 2006, 2:00 PM at the Bids and Awards Committee Office, 2nd Floor, Right Wing, City Hall Building, General Santos City. Bids will be opened in the presence of the Bidders' representatives who choose to attend at the address below at 2:00 PM, March 14, 2006.

Completion of the Works is required by Two Hundred (200) Calendar days for Proposed Two Storey Building at General Santos City Hospital and Two Hundred Fifty (250) Calendar days for the Construction of Legislative Building at City Hall Compound, General Santos City.

The Local Government Unit of General Santos City (LGU-GSC) reserves the right to accept or reject any Bid, to annul the bidding process, and to reject all Bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected Bidder or Bidders.

Bids and Awards Committee
Gina Y. Pigar
2nd Floor, Right Wing, City Hall Building, General Santos City
Tel. Nos. (083) 301-0553, (083) 301-3834
Fax: (083) 301-0553
website address: www.gensantos.gov.ph

(Sgd.) NAEL JOSEPH D. CRUSPERO
BAC Chairman

(PDI–Feb. 7 & 14, 2006)

Republic of the Philippines
MANILA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT AUTHORITY
MIAA Administration Building, MIA Road Pasay City, Metro Manila

Invitation to Apply for Eligibility and to Bid

SUPPLY AND INSTALLATION OF FIRE ALARM COMPONENTS IN THE REHABILITATION AND UPGRADE OF FIRE ALARM DETECTION SYSTEM (FADS) AT TERMINAL 2 FIRE COMMAND

1. The ***MANILA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT AUTHORITY (MIAA)***, through its ***2005 Corporate Fund*** intends to apply the sum of ***Php3,787,856.00*** being the Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC) to payments under the contract for the ***Supply and Installation of Fire Alarm Components in the Rehabilitation and Upgrade of Fire Alarm Detection System (FADS) at Terminal 2 Fire Command.*** Bids received in excess of the ABC shall be automatically rejected at Bid opening.
2. The MIAA invites Bids from eligible Bidders for the ***Supply and Installation of Fire Alarm Components in the Rehabilitation and Upgrade of Fire Alarm Detection System (FADS) at Terminal 2 Fire Command.*** Delivery of the goods shall be within ninety (90) working days after the receipt of the approved Contract. The description of an eligible Bidder is contained in the Bidding Documents, Instructions to Biders (ITB).
3. Bidding will be conducted through open competitive bidding procedures, using non-discretionary pass/fail criteria as specified in the Implementing Rules and Regulations Part A (IRR-A) of Republic Act 9184, otherwise known as the "Government Procurement Reform Act," and is restricted to Filipino citizens/sole proprietorships, organizations with at least sixty percent (60%) interest or outstanding capital stock belonging to citizens of the Philippines, and to citizens or organizations of a country the laws or regulations of which grant similar rights or privileges to Filipino citizens, pursuant to Republic Act 5183 (R.A. 5183) and subject to Commonwealth Act 138 (C.A. 138). Only Bids from Bidders who pass the eligibility check will be opened. The process for the eligibility check is described in Bidding Documents, ITB. The bidder with the Lowest Calculated Bid (LCB) shall advance to the post-qualification stage in order to finally determine responsiveness of the bid to technical and financial requirements of the project. The contract shall then awarded to the Lowest Calculated and Responsive Bidder (LCRB) who was determined as such during the post-qualification procedure.
4. Interested Bidders may obtain further information from *Office of the Secretariat, Bids and Awards Committee, MIAA* and inspect the Bidding Documents at the address given below from ***8:00 AM to 5:00 PM.***
5. A complete set of Bidding Documents may be purchased by Interested Bidders from the address below on ***February 6-20, 2006*** and upon payment of non-refundable fee in the amount of ***Php4,242.40 (VAT Inclusive)*** The method of payment will be ***Cash or Managers/Cashiers Check (payable to Manila International Airport Authority).*** The Bidding Documents shall be received personally by the prospective Bidder or his authorized representative.
6. *The Bids and Awards Committee*, MIAA will hold a Pre-bid Conference open to all interested parties on February 24, 2006, 9:00 AM at ***Audio Visual Room, 4th Floor, MIAA Administration Building, MIA Road, Pasay City.***
7. Bids and eligibility requirements must be delivered to the address below on or before ***March 10, 2006, 9:00 AM.*** All Bids must be accompanied by a Bid security in the form of any of the following or an equivalent amount in a freely convertible currency:
   a. CASH, CERTIFIED CHECK, CASHIER'S CHECK, MANAGER'S CHECK, BANK DRAFT OR IRREVOCABLE LETTER OF CREDIT one percent (1%) of the Approved Budget for the Contract.
   b. BANK GUARANTEE – one and a half percent (1½%) of the Approved Budget for the Contract.
   c. SURETY BOND – two and a half percent (2½%) of the Approved Budget for the Contract; callable on demand, issued by the GSIS or by any reputable private insurance company, provided, that it is accompanied by the company's valid certificate of accreditation issued by the Insurance Commission (for private insurance company) and official receipt of payment of premium (GSIS and private insurance company).

   Late Bids shall not be accepted
8. Bid opening shall be on ***March 10, 2006, 9:30 AM*** at the ***Audio Visual Room, 4th Floor, MIAA Administration Building, MIA Road, Pasay City.*** Bids will be opened in the presence of the Bidders' representative who choose to attend at the stated address.
9. Minimum Eligibility Requirements of the prospective bidders:
   a. Supplier must be Authorized in the Philippines
   b. One (1) year warranty on labor and materials
   c. Completion of ninety (90) working days
10. Prospective bidders should have experience in undertaking a similar project within the last two (2) years with an amount of at least 50% of the approved budget for the contract to be bid.
11. The ***MANILA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT AUTHORITY*** reserves the right to accept or reject any Bid, to annul the bidding process, and to reject all Bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected Bidder or Bidders

Bids and Awards Committee
Joanne G. La Madrid
4th floor, MIAA Administration Bldg., MIA Road Pasay City
Trunk line: (02) 877-1109 loc. 3795
Fax No.: (02) 877-1801

(Sgd.) ATTY. OSCAR L. PARAS, JR.
Chairman, Bids and Awards Committee

(PDI–Feb. 7 & 14, 2006)

AUCTION SALE

Meycauayan-Filipinas Pawnshop,Allw Complex, Calvario,Meyc.Bulacan. All Unredeemed Pledges of AUG. 2005 willl be Auctioned on FEB. 24, 10:00am. Lanuza & Sons Autioneer.
(PDI- February 14, 2006)

AUCTION SALE

Muñoz-Filipinas Pawnshop, Roosevelt Ave, Katipunan, Diliman, Quezon City. All unredeemed pledges of Aug. & Sept. 2005 will be auctioned on Feb. 24 2006; 2:30PM. Lanuza & Sons-Auctioneer
(PDI - February 14, 2006)

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ERRATUM

In the Invitation to Apply for Eligibility and to Bid, ITB No.: 01-08-2006 of **Philippine Amusement & Gaming Corporation (PAGCOR)** printed in this paper **February 5 & 12, 2006**, the approved budget for Casino Filipino – Hyatt and Casino Filipino-Silahis should be **P30,448,619.52** and not P30,446,619.52 as published.

Our apologies.

More Classifieds Ads on Page B4

OBITUARIES

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CECILIA T. SAMANIEGO

of Hilltop Subdivision, Novaliches, Quezon City

Peacefully joined our Creator o.. February 11, 2006.

Her sister **Pilar** of Palmdale, California, other sisters who preceded her in death **Natividad, Rita, Purificacion,** and **Amada**; brothers who also preceded her in death **Julian, Ricardo, Vicente,** and **Arturo**; nieces **Amihan, Iluminada, Antonette, Divina, Angelita, Amelia, Teresita** and **Julieta**; nephews **Bayani, Antonio, Ricardo Jr., Managumpay, Arturo, Eduardo, Renato, Rafael, Miguel, Cesar, Juanito, Julianito, Romart, Vicente,** and **Jonathan**; and other relatives and friends request your prayers for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her remains lie in state at the Ascension of Our Lord Parish, Lagro Subdivision, Novaliches, Quezon City.

After the 9:00 a.m. Mass on Thursday, February 16, 2006, interment will take place at the Holy Cross Memorial Park, Quirino Highway, Novaliches, Quezon City.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to the Ascension of Our Lord Parish, Lagro Subdivision, Novaliches, Quezon City

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OBITUARY REQUIREMENTS
❶ Copy of Death Certificate
❷ Any identification document (I.D.)
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ERRATUM

In the obituary ad of **DR. MA. GRACIA (GRACE) LUMBA, Ph.D.** published in the Philippine Daily Inquirer February 13, 2006, the name of her daughter was inadvertently printed as **Mabia L. Halliday** instead of **MARIA L. HALLIDAY.**

Our apologies

Our Dearly Beloved

MAMA

Norma Soriaga Villamayor

now rests in the infinite warmth
and embrace of our Lord.
She joined our Creator
on the 12th of February, 2006,
at the age of 78.

Her loving husband **ENGR. FILOTEO, JR.**; children **NONOT & IYOH, PAUL** (†) & **JOEY, NOEL & MARIBEL, JOSEPH** and **CHRISTINE**; grandchildren, brothers and sister and all her relatives and friends request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her remains lie in state at Arlington Memorial Chapels, Araneta Avenue, Quezon City.

Cremation will be held on February 16, 2006 at 9:00 a.m. at Loyola Memorial Park Crematory, Marikina City after the 7:00 a.m. Mass at Arlington, Araneta.

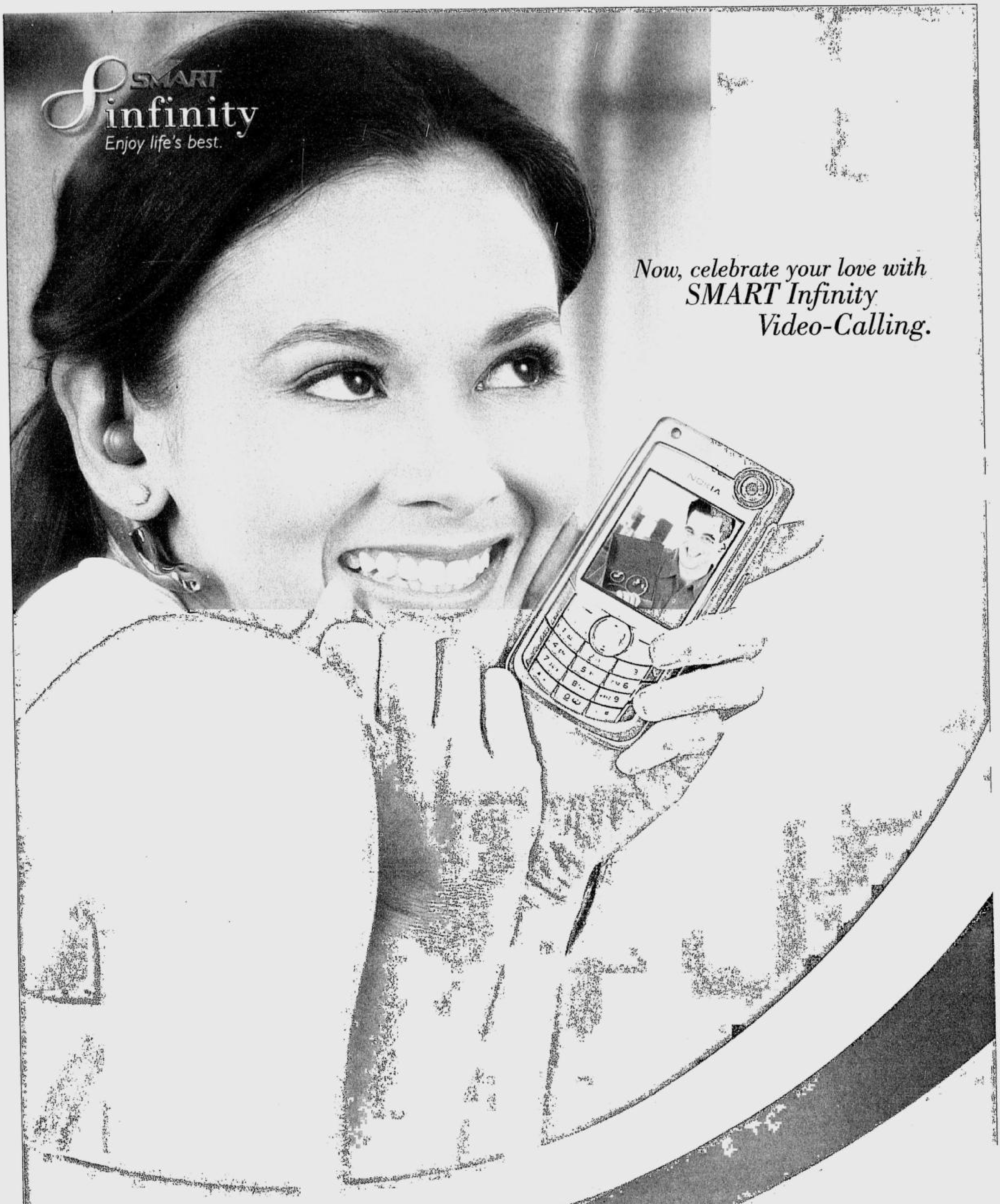
BENJAMIN BERNARDO DAMIAN

Died in the grace of our Lord on
February 12, 2006 at the age of 87

His bereaved wife **Amparo**; children **Sonny** and **Rita, Girlie** and **Clifton**; grandchildren **Benjie, Claire, Tin** and **Iya**; sisters, sisters-in-law, nephews, nieces, relatives and friends request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His body lies in state at No. 7 G. Valderrama Street, Bambang, Pasig City.

Interment will be on Thursday, February 16, 2006 at the Pasig Catholic Cemetery after the 1:00 p.m. mass at the Immaculate Conception Cathedral in Pasig City.



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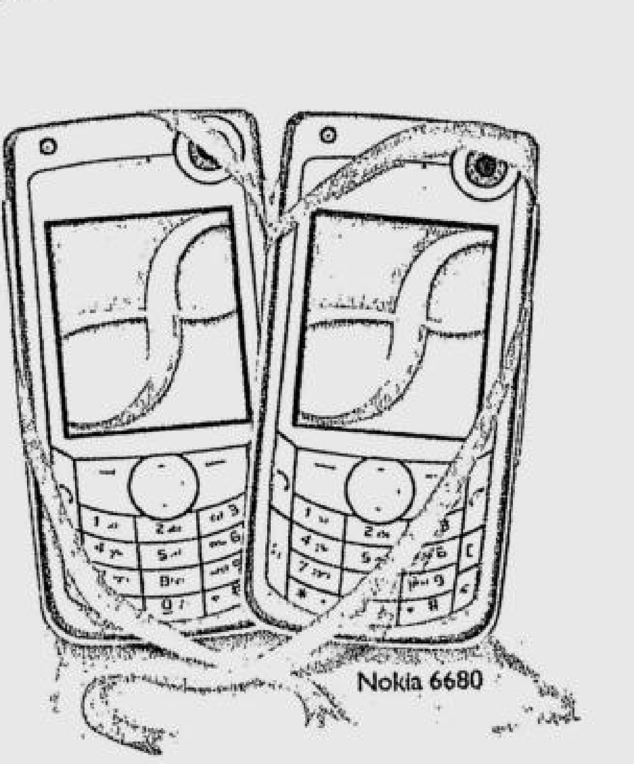

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LIFESTYLE

Editor Chelo Banal-Formoso

Love in the time of E-VAT

By Anne A. Jambora

The 2-percent increase in the expanded value-added tax means more incentive for value-added dating

AS SOON AS HER DAILY GRIND IS over, Angela Samson (not her real name) lets her hair down in the hippest night spots of the city or in some quiet, yet undiscovered nook. By her side, as always, is her boyfriend of two years, Augusto, whose idea of going out together almost every day was the spring of their adventures together in the city and beyond.

Lucky for them they earn enough to carelessly throw away between P1,000-2,000 each every time they go out—and they make sure dating is as regular as almost every day. That's not even counting the out-of-town trips that easily require each to fork in P4,000 or more.

But with the E-VAT now at a steep 12 percent, the couple know they sorely need a drastic lifestyle makeover.

Movie-going is among the first to go on their "reform" list. Instead of indulging themselves in their fave cinemas where tickets have jacked up from P130 to P160, both now goes to a neighboring mall that charges only P110. Angela says they might even try the older movie houses of the same mall whose tickets are at an affordable P90.

Cheap food

Their dining experience has also taken an audacious turnaround. Homey and traditional cooking has taken over posh and pricey dishes. Both have found out they can each spend as less as P38-P100 per scrumptious meal at decent eating places. And these are not the bland fast-food hangouts either, whom Angela mockingly classify as "emergency provisions." If they're cash-strapped, they opt to cook at Angela's place. Luxurious cuisine, she says, are now reserved for special occasions.

"It is a conscious effort to look for cheaper alternatives now that we drive up all the way to Binondo in search of great food places," she says.

Even their car park routine has changed. If, for instance, a parking space is free or charges a minimal fee for the first, say, four hours then charges per hour thereafter, Augusto will take the car out for a spin just before the lease on the space expires, then drives it back again to park. That way, Angela says, they won't have to pay the succeeding per-hour rate.

And it used to be that Augusto had the penchant of pumping in premium gasoline into the car that traveling from his house in Parañaque to pick up Angela in Manila cost him at least P200. Today he has learned to settle for cheaper substitutes.

Both also spend economical activities together, such as playing in an 18-hole mini golf range with an asking price of only P230/head, with the P100 refundable upon checking out. Although golf is not exactly their cup of tea, she says they get to spend several fun hours together for a very minimal price. The same goes for badminton, their favorite sport, that allows them to play until they run out of breath for only P100.

Recently, the couple has learned another enjoyable trip—walking tours in various locations in the city that are absolutely free. Not only will the tours give them a wonderful time taking lazy walks together, but they get to learn history along the way, too.

It is Angela's New Year's resolution not to drain her paycheck. So far, she says, she's doing a good job at it. Times are hard, she says, but scrimping need not mean sacrificing quality of life. After all, the old adage still holds true: The best things in life are free.

E-mail the author at ajambora@inquirer.com.ph

What the heart needs

LOVE—FOR YOUR HEART, THAT IS—SHOULD be forever.

Studies show that heart disease is no longer just a problem of the elderly. Many young Filipinos are increasingly at risk of heart attack.

Dr. Antonio Sibulo Jr., director of the Heart Institute of the St. Luke's Medical Center, says living and eating habits have to change to prevent heart diseases.

Though the elderly (60 years old and above) are generally at greater risk due to the stiffening of blood vessels, Sibulo says he is now getting patients in their 20s.

Four major factors that may lead to heart disease are high cholesterol, smoking, hypertension and diabetes. Contributing factors are sedentary living, lack of exercise, obesity, stress and gender.

Sibulo says the westernization of the Filipino diet—fatty foods and lots of meat—has led to higher cholesterol levels.

Hypertension or high blood pressure is now a problem with some 20 percent of the Philippine population.

A smoker is 1.5 times more likely to develop heart ailments than a nonsmoker.

Sibulo, who set up the St. Luke's Cardiac Rehabilitation Department (tel. 7230101) in 1989, says even people with no heart problems should do regular 30-40 minutes workout three times a week with moderate intensity.

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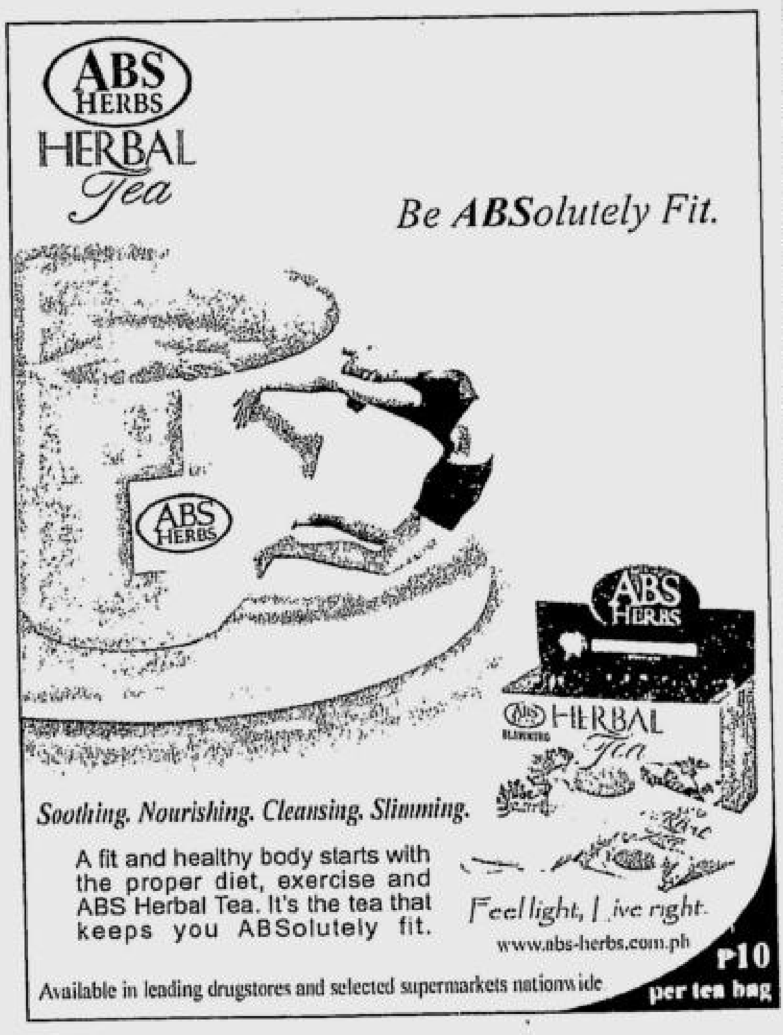

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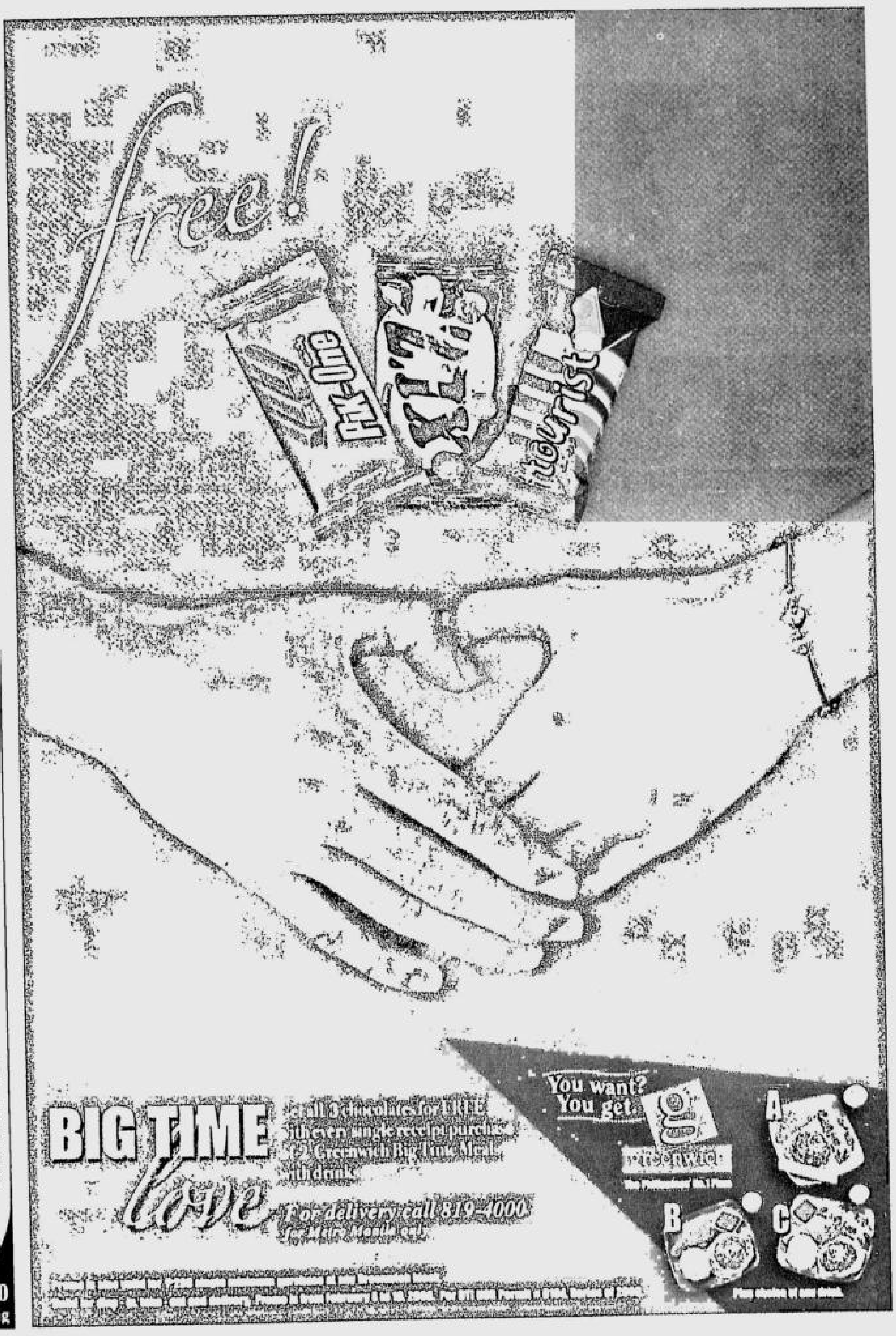

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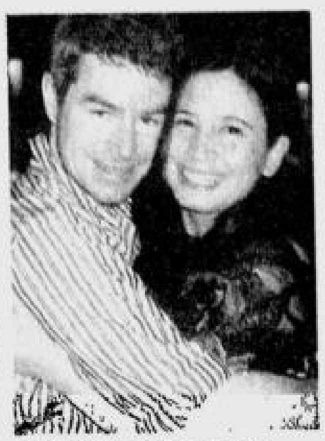
AYALA'S secret weapon, gorgeous Cheska Diaz, with her prince charming, businessman Carlitos Arcache Morales


HAPPY together. Scott Bannon and his attractive wife Bea Zubiri fell in love while working for the same firm in San Francisco.

BROTHER and sister love. International businessman, elusive bachelor Ricky Delgado, and his gorgeous sister Carmen Delgado

CUPID hit the bull's eye. Still in each other's arms four years later, the beautiful twosome of Johnny Velasquez and Maripi Muscat

ONE of my dearest friends, glam gal Vicky F. Zubiri, who will forever be my soulmate

AFTER SIX years, international businessman Marcel Crespo professed true love for the "it" gal of 2005, Celine Lopez.

FATHERLY love at its best! Stunning beauty Amanda T. with her dad, mega entrepreneur Al Tengco

TRUE LOVE: Beautiful Lizzie Eder gives her husband, dashing Jaime Augusto Zobel, a big hug and a kiss.

SO IN LOVE. Beautiful young couple Victor Delfour and Stephanie Zubiri fell in love at first sight and will exchange vows this July.

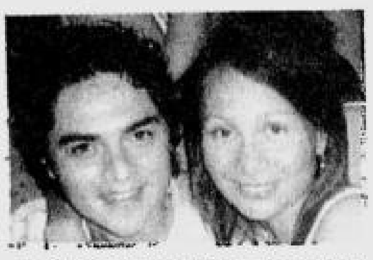
RUSTAN'S popular Joel Tantoco and tall, eye-catching beauty Lisa Rossiter are still on after two years.

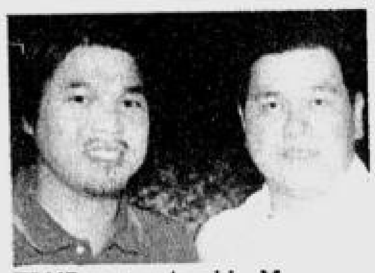
DEFINITELY the wedding of the year, held in Tagaytay with 1,000 guests from Cosmo Manille's *chi-chi* set

SOME 25,000 invitees witnessed the one-of-a-kind tribal wedding of Bae Audrey Tan and Datu Miguel Zubiri.

Lovers and other strangers

ANGELIQUE Villaraza said good-bye to her old love after meeting Chut Cuerva.


AWARD-WINNING underwater photographer Gutsy Tuason and top equestrienne Becca Dosch are back in each other's arms.


TRUE companionship. My *palanggas*, Bench CEO Ben Chan, and talented architect and writer Miguel Pastor, are blessed with ultimate bonding.

WITHOUT BATTING AN EYELASH

Maurice Arcache

Photos by Alex Van Hagen using **Kodak** EasyShare system

FRIENDSHIP, A CHOSEN companion, an intimate photo that turns into a lasting memory, a brotherly hug, laughter . . . and lovers.

Yes, *palanggas*, love may be defined in countless ways.

For the true romantic, this day is most anticipated. But for the cynic and heartbroken, it's just another day.

I'm about to show how Cupid, that little rascal, may or may not mold our individual destinies in the avenue of love.

Let's start with this love affair of award-winning underwater photographer **Gutsy Tuason** with eye-catching top equestrienne **Becca Dosch** that lasted several years. Enter gorgeous model **Amanda Griffin**, who ended her short-lived love affair with handsome **Paolo Araneta**.

Gutsy T. breaks up with Becca D. to hook up with Amanda. The romance lasted only a short while, as incompatibility made them call it quits.

But love, *palanggas*, works in a funny way. Gutsy T. realized that Becca was the girl for him after all so, as of this writing, they are "on again."

My favorite gal for all seasons, talented designer and extremely intelligent writer **Celine Lopez** had her ups and downs in romance. Then came along international entrepreneur and eligible bachelor **Marcel Crespo**, who had his own share of disappointments. They now find themselves in each other's arms.

"For six years I loved Celine from a distance. Although we moved in the same circle, I went on with my life till I made my feelings known to her," Marcel told *moi*.

"I love the person. He is the man I was looking for but did not realize it till we started dating," Celine explained, the look of happiness in her eyes. They are now one of the happiest twosomes in our town, *palanggas*.

In love again

Another beautiful story is that of a gorgeous woman. For several years, she thought she was happily married but things began to turn sour and nasty. She decides to leave home and start a new life.

Meanwhile, this low-profile, dashing gentleman is also on the same boat. His "marriage was hitting rock-bottom, so he decides to be honest and end his marriage."

Both have the same personalities and chi-chi backgrounds. The lady and the gentleman meet, and knew instantly they were meant for each other. Today, this second-time-around lovers are extremely happy, despite the envy and intrigues that plague them. Yes, dahlings, against all odds they survived and will survive.

This business magnate from the north was happily married for years to a beautiful woman with a well-known family name. After a son and a daughter, the couple separated. Now, after several years of being apart, the ex-husband is ready to go back to his beautiful ex-wife. But she is not ready to be "a stay-at-home wife again."

"My kids are old enough now to understand what we both did, so why should I go back to him? We are the greatest of friends, and it's better this way. At least for now," the wife told me with a teasing laugh.

Head-turner beauty **Eva Abesamis**, who separated from her husband, ace photographer **Patrick Koenigswarter**, years ago, has now found solid love with sugar baron **Citoy Lopez**, who was also separated from his wife way before he met Eva A.

Then we have the sugar baron **Rito Carlos "Judgee" Lopez Peña**, who fell madly in love with his schoolmate, then 14-year-young vivacious **Sarah Opelencia**. Not long after Sarah's schooling abroad, Judgee declared his undying love for her. They tied the knot in a chapel in the middle of his sugarcane field in the south, *palanggas*.

ILOILO'S top hostess Sarah Opolencia P. and sugar baron Judgee Lopez Peña, who fell in love in high school, celebrated their 25th anniversary by renewing their vows.

Two weeks ago, the couple renewed their beautiful marriage vows, celebrating 25 silvery years of love and happiness in Iloilo.

Marriage isn't passé

Last year, *moi* witnessed couples, who still believed in marriage, gave up their independence and carefree single life to vow "till death do us part."

One of our town's most eligible bachelors, INQ7.net president and CEO **Paolo Prieto**, said his "I do" to **Ria Francisco**, now PDI's super attractive Lifestyle contributing editor, in a romantic church wedding in cool Tagaytay.

Next, tall, good-looking southern gentleman **Carlos Balcells** wed breast-cancer specialist Dr. **Diana Cua**. They first met on a date in San Francisco and became husband and wife in a gorgeous wedding at a private chapel in the groom's mansion in the middle of a sugarcane field in Talisay, Negros.

Then there was the wedding of one of Cosmo Manille's super beautiful couples *aprés* six years of togetherness—drop-dead handsome **Paolo Lobregat** and sultry, talented designer **Katrina "Kat" Tantoco**—at the Sta. Elena Country Club.

Good and bad news

Naturellement, there is always bad news and good news.

Let's start with the bad news. While their pals thought it was going to be it for extremely intelligent beauty Sunshine de Leon and elusive Portuguese bachelor **Antonio Garcia** of ADB, one of the parties involved decided to end the relationship because he/she was not "ready for marriage."

Now, the broken heart has healed. Sunshine and Antonio are in the restaurant business together in Boracay, as the best of friends, with their partner, **Niño Zulueta**. Now that's being so civilized.

The end-of-the-year shocker for Cosmo Manille's *alta sociedad* was the breakup of the marriage of sultry beauty and woman of absolute style **Maryann Ojeda** and entrepreneur **Francis Lumen**, the NBC president, after 11 years as a perfect couple.

Francis L. fell for a younger woman he met through an associate. The woman is hoping to be a singer. As the French would say, *c'est dommage* (as in, what a pity).

She was one of the most eligible debutantes of the old-wealth society at the time. He was a dashing basketball hero who traces his lineage to southern sugar barons.

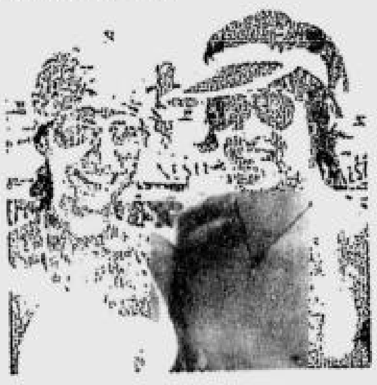
A whirlwind courtship led to a marriage that has lasted for 50 golden years. Now business magnate **Paing Hechanova** and **Mely Concepcion** are aiming for platinum, dahlings.

And, finally, I would definitely say, dahlings, that the wedding of the year was that of handsome Rep. **Juan Miguel Zubiri** and gorgeous **Audrey Tan**, after two years of togetherness.

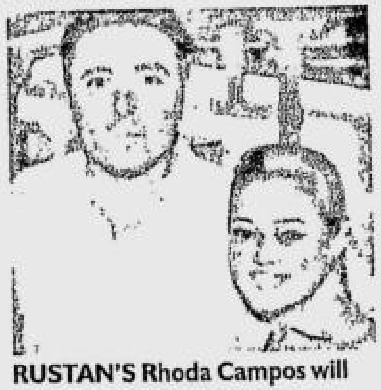
CUPID is crying. Woman of style Maryann Ojeda and entrepreneur Francis Lumen have gone their separate ways.

NOTHING can stop this hot romance—gorgeous Ornusa Cadness and the "it" boy of 2004, Borgy Manotoc.

BUSINESS magnate Paing Hechanova and socialite Mely Concepcion are going for the platinum.


BODIES beautiful. It's still hot love after two sizzling years for Valerie delos Santos and Robby Mananquil.

IT'S all over for "Punch" gal, vivacious Chinggay Andrada, and architect Victor Consunji.


RUSTAN'S Rhoda Campos will marry BPO associate director Vincent Aldanese in October.

They had an awesome tribal wedding witnessed by political bigwigs of Mindanao and 25,000 guests belonging to his constituency. A grand wedding followed in Tagaytay and the reception was held at the beautifully renovated Taal Vista Lodge. Over a thousand high-ranking government officials headed by no less than President **Macapagal-Arroyo** and Cosmopolitan Manille's *alta sociedad* attended.

My mother was an extremely beautiful woman. My dad, although totally in love with her, had the roving eye of an eagle, which sent my mother into jealous fits. One day, my father wrote a poem for her that completely changed her attitude toward him for the better.

So always remember "love may die if held too tightly, love may fly if held too lightly. How do I know whether I'm killing you or letting you go?"

In the midst of this confusion, my dearest *palanggas*, simply live life and let love live. After all, love conquers us...so go take that leap. It's worth it!

INSIDE OUT

Cory Quirino

THE COLUMNS Inside Out by Cory Quirino and Inner Awareness by Jaime Licauco will appear next week. ED

INNER AWARENESS

Jaime T. Licauco

Do-it-yourself cardiovascular tests

HOLISTIC HEALTH EXPERT Mariandy Fricke believes that the world's best doctor and healer is you. Michael Roizen and Mehmet Oz couldn't agree more.

In their bestseller, "You: The Owner's Manual," the medical doctors give readers easy-to-understand explanations about how the human body functions and what you can do to maintain good health and prevent disease.

WELL AND GOOD

Tina Juan

If you want simple no-nonsense health information written with a touch of humor, this is the book for you. Roizen and Oz also have practical do-it-yourself tests for many aspects of health like gallstones, sleep apnea, memory and food allergies.

The tests should not keep you from seeking medical attention but may open your eyes to the need to see a doctor. Here are three tests from the book to determine the health of your heart, lungs and blood vessels:

Stairway to heaven

The stairs in your home or office can tell you a lot about your heart and lungs, according to Roizen and Oz. The test is simple: Briskly run up two flights of stairs or walk six blocks. If you can do either without stopping to rest or without gasping for air, your lungs are most likely in okay shape.

They claim the test can determine if someone is fit for surgery. "For those who pass the test, it indicates a decrease in your risk of dying or being disabled in surgery to that of someone who is about 10 years younger. It indicates your lung's ability to provide oxygen and exhale carbon dioxide."

They recommend that people do the test every month to check lung function and overall fitness level. "One of the major warning signs of decreased lung function is seeing a severe change in your ability to complete the test—from being able to walk the flights easily to suddenly having a lot of trouble with it.

"The reason? When you exercise over this compact period of time, shortness of breath means all your organs are feeling deprived of oxygen, and that some of them might not be getting enough."

South of the border

Men have a built-in system to find out if their arteries are healthy or not. All they have to do is look below their belt. Roizen and Oz claim that the penis is a man's dipstick. It can tell how everything is functioning throughout the rest of a man's body.

"Without proper blood flow—meaning that arteries do not dilate appropriately because they are inflamed or clogged—men can't get an erection because they can't get blood in or keep it there.

"The chemical mechanisms that work to get blood in and out of the penis are the same ones that help blood flow to and from the brain, heart and kidneys. No matter the location of veins and arteries in your body, it's the same process."

Mirror, mirror

Roizen and Oz say one of the first signs of arterial aging can be seen in your ear lobes. A diagonal crease in your lobes is a warning sign. They claim so are yellowish plaques of cholesterol deposits around the eyelids, which are called *xanthelasmas*.

Declining hormone levels can also be seen in the mirror. They write, "If a man notices that he used to shave once a day, but now has to shave less often, it's a sign that testosterone is not stimulating a great deal of beard growth, which is a sign of low testosterone levels."

Note: The Association of Fitness Professionals of the Philippines will hold a Fitness and Management Seminar-Workshop on Feb. 25. The American Fitness and Aerobics Association will hold a Kickboxing Workshop on Feb. 24 and Resistance Class Workshop on Feb. 26. For all events, call Joy at 9202762 and 0917-5181202, or log on to www.fitnessphilippines.org.

Visit www.tinajuanfitness.info

EXERCISE OF THE WEEK

45-degree scissors

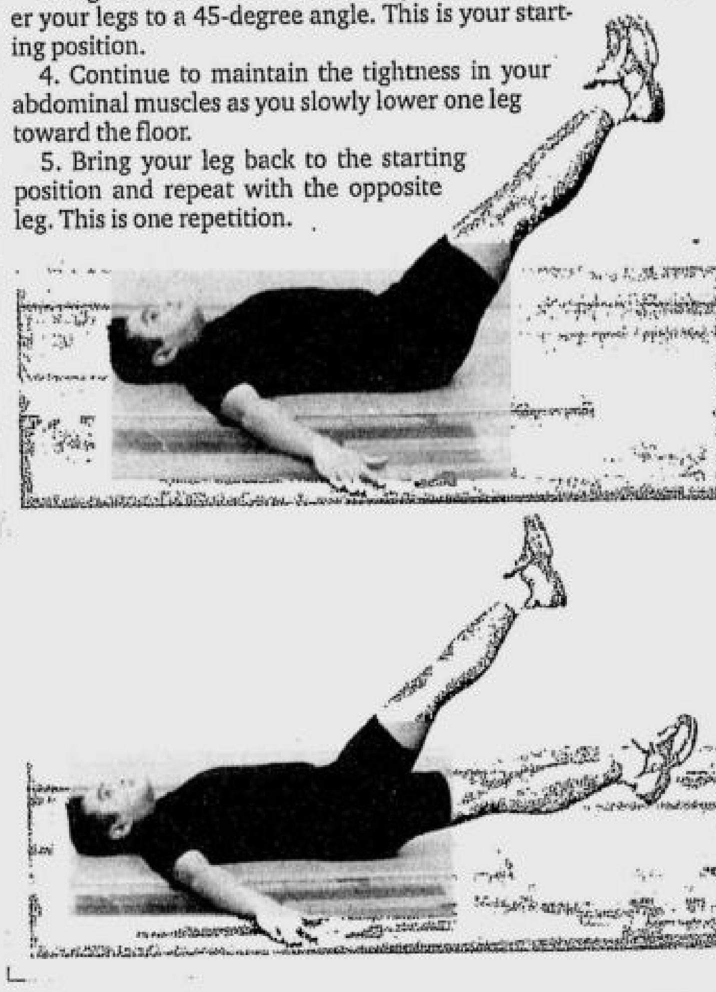
STRENGTHENS ABDOMINAL MUSCLES

Equipment:

Exercise mat

Exercise technique:

1. Lie down on the exercise mat with your arms extended beside you.
2. Bring your knees directly above your hips. Extend both legs straight up.
3. Tighten abdominal muscles as you slowly lower your legs to a 45-degree angle. This is your starting position.
4. Continue to maintain the tightness in your abdominal muscles as you slowly lower one leg toward the floor.
5. Bring your leg back to the starting position and repeat with the opposite leg. This is one repetition.
6. Continue in this pattern until you have completed the desired number of repetitions.

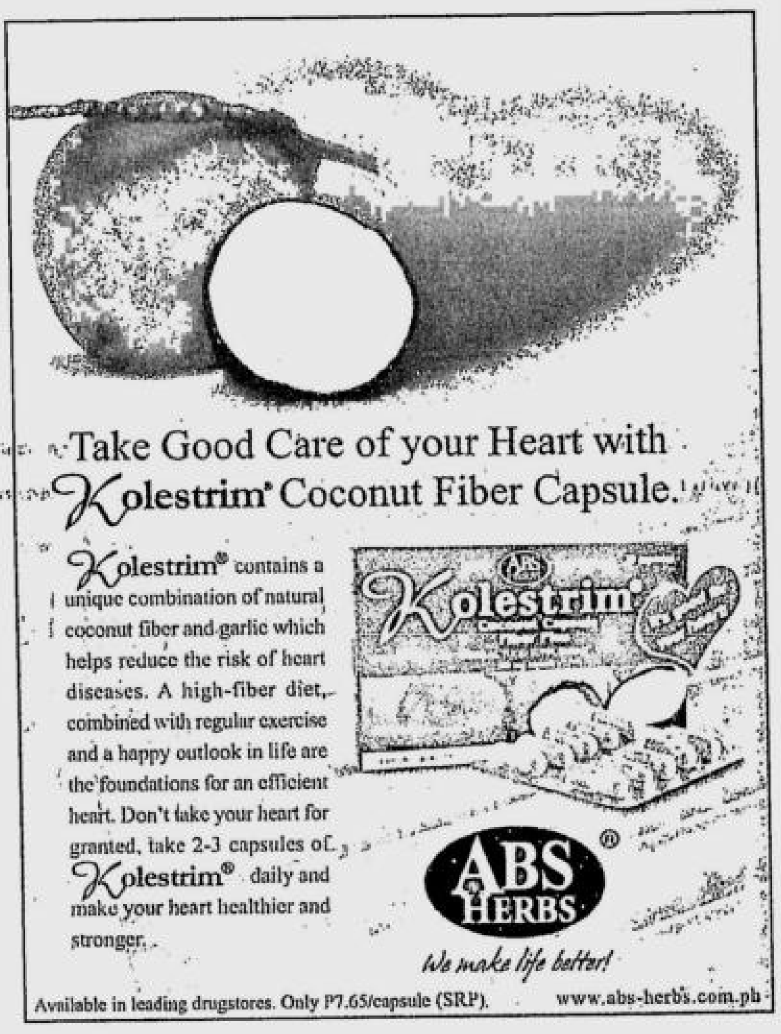


Performance tips:

1. Do not attempt to lower your legs to the 45-degree starting position until you have tightened your abdominal muscles.
2. Keep your abdominals tight to maintain balance and control all throughout the exercise.
3. If you feel your lower back arching off the floor, take a rest. This means your muscles are fatigued.
4. Beginner level: To modify this exercise, keep your legs directly over your hips as the starting position. Lower your legs one by one to the 45-degree position.
5. If this bothers your lower back in any way, don't do the exercise.
6. Variation: Switch legs a little faster.

Repetitions:

Eight to 10 repetitions



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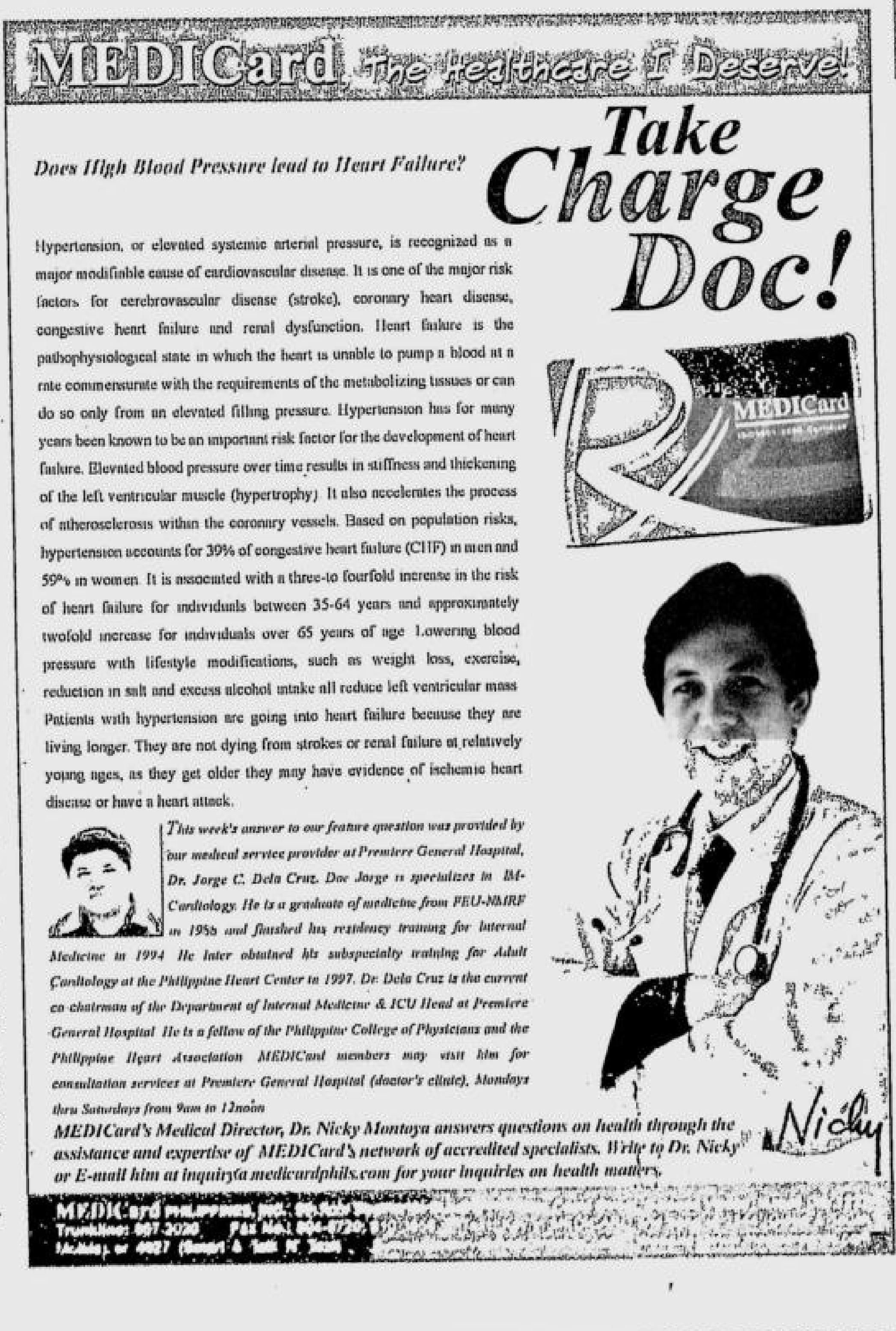

MEDICard The Healthcare I Deserve!

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Does High Blood Pressure lead to Heart Failure?

Hypertension, or elevated systemic arterial pressure, is recognized as a major modifiable cause of cardiovascular disease. It is one of the major risk factors for cerebrovascular disease (stroke), coronary heart disease, congestive heart failure and renal dysfunction. Heart failure is the pathophysiological state in which the heart is unable to pump a blood at a rate commensurate with the requirements of the metabolizing tissues or can do so only from an elevated filling pressure. Hypertension has for many years been known to be an important risk factor for the development of heart failure. Elevated blood pressure over time results in stiffness and thickening of the left ventricular muscle (hypertrophy). It also accelerates the process of atherosclerosis within the coronary vessels. Based on population risks, hypertension accounts for 39% of congestive heart failure (CHF) in men and 59% in women. It is associated with a three-to fourfold increase in the risk of heart failure for individuals between 35-64 years and approximately twofold increase for individuals over 65 years of age. Lowering blood pressure with lifestyle modifications, such as weight loss, exercise, reduction in salt and excess alcohol intake all reduce left ventricular mass. Patients with hypertension are going into heart failure because they are living longer. They are not dying from strokes or renal failure at relatively young ages, as they get older they may have evidence of ischemic heart disease or have a heart attack.

This week's answer to our feature question was provided by our medical service provider at Premiere General Hospital, Dr. Jorge C. Dela Cruz. Doc Jorge is specializes in IM-Cardiology. He is a graduate of medicine from FEU-NRMF in 1986 and finished his residency training for Internal Medicine in 1994. He later obtained his subspecialty training for Adult Cardiology at the Philippine Heart Center in 1997. Dr. Dela Cruz is the current co-chairman of the Department of Internal Medicine & ICU Head at Premiere General Hospital. He is a fellow of the Philippine College of Physicians and the Philippine Heart Association. MEDICard members may visit him for consultation services at Premiere General Hospital (doctor's clinic), Mondays thru Saturdays from 9am to 12noon.

MEDICard's Medical Director, Dr. Nicky Montoya answers questions on health through the assistance and expertise of MEDICard's network of accredited specialists. Write to Dr. Nicky or E-mail him at inquiry@medicardphils.com for your inquiries on health matters.

Nicky

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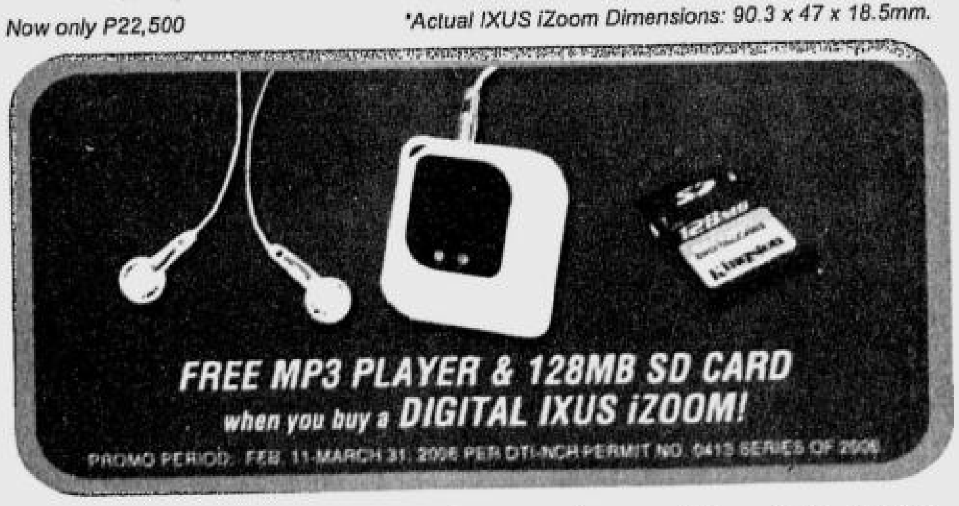

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LOVE according to ... Dopamine?

How the brain functions (literally) when you're in love

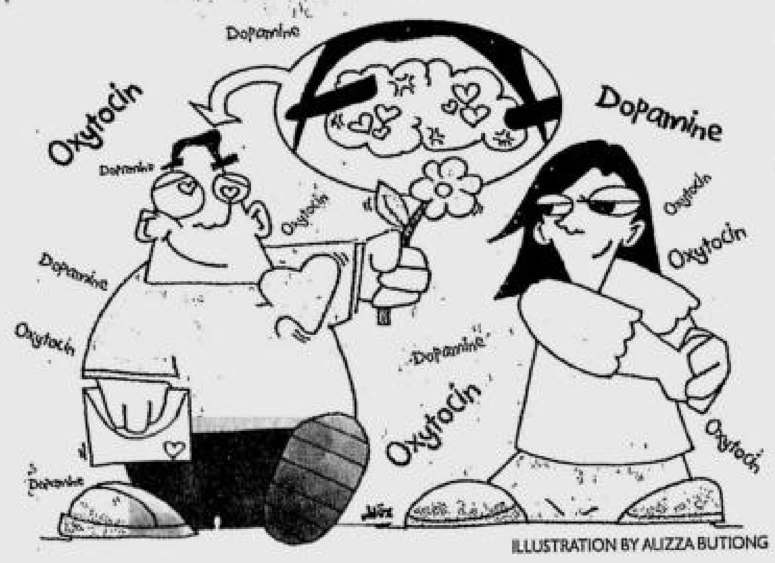

ILLUSTRATION BY ALIZZA BUTIONG

By Marlet D. Salazar

OH LOVE! THAT FLEETING FEELING THAT LEAVES YOU BREATHLESS, speechless, dreamy, and oftentimes foolish, is in the brains after all.

Passionate. Romantic. Sweet. All these words are associated with love.

Dopamine. Oxytocin. Phenylethylamine. Believe it or not, these are also associated with, uh, love?

Countless books, poems, songs, and stories are written about or are inspired by love. A number of self-help books are written to cope with this intoxicating feeling, yet, many still get blinded by it.

Clichés like "Love turns the world upside down" seems appropriate in all aspects. Not only writers' and composers' lives are touched by it, scientists' too.

Many researchers and scientists are trying to explain what poets and romantic writers couldn't. Up until now, there is no exact definition of love. Yes, slum book entries may offer a meaning or two but examining more closely, these are descriptions of how one feels when in love. But what is love, really?

The closest Merriam-Webster got in defining romantic love is: as verb, "attraction based on sexual desire; affection and tenderness felt by lovers."

The cover story of the February issue of the National Geographic magazine attempts to enlighten people with this thing called love, and why passionate love doesn't last.

Author and professor Helen Fisher spent years looking at love through MRI (magnetic resonance imaging). It may seem unromantic that instead of the heart, she examined the brains of subjects who have just fallen madly in love. Two photographs were shown to them to determine how their brains would react.

Love and MRI

Fisher said that when shown the photograph of their loved ones the parts of the brain basically linked to reward and pleasure lit up. These are called *ventral tegmental* area and the *caudate* nucleus.

Although dopamine may not sound too sweet a word to a person in love, Fisher believes that this neurotransmitter can be translated to an endogenous love potion. National Geographic writes: "Love lights up the caudate nucleus because it is home to a dense spread of receptors for a neurotransmitter called dopamine."

According to the First Science website, "fMRI (functional magnetic resonance imaging) localizes areas of increased blood flow in the brain when certain bundles of nerve cells respond to a particular stimulus." That explains why people blush when they see the object of their affection but the reddening of the face can also be because of embarrassment or fear. When a person exerts much energy than normal or is exhilarated, dopamine is at work.

Fisher is a professor at Rutgers University. Her book, "Why We Love: The Nature and Chemistry of Romantic Love," has been the subject of scrutiny and discussion among researchers.

The 2004 web article "The Physics and Chemistry of Love" by Kanika Goswami offers a clearer, albeit, scientific explanation of how body chemicals "operate" when a person is in love.

If it needs two people to make an ideal romantic love, chemicals also need to "marry" to achieve that feeling. Phenylethylamine and oxytocin form the chemistry of love.

Phenylethylamine is called the love molecule. "It speeds up the flow of information between cells." Oxytocin is referred to as the cuddling chemical. "It promotes the need to be physically held by the mate."

Love and OCD

To set off the initial stage of falling in love called infatuation, these two chemicals need a little help from norepinephrine (which stimulates the production of adrenalin).

That kind of feeling and that of someone who just accomplished something is quite the same. It is an adrenaline rush.

Fisher noted in both her National Geographic and WebMD interviews that "romantic love is related to abnormalities in the neurotransmitters serotonin, dopamine, and norepinephrine, making it biochemically similar to obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD), a psychiatric illness where thoughts of a single subject dominate the patient's life."

Now, isn't that the same feeling when a person says, "I'm head over heels in love with someone"? That your world exists only with each other? Smooching and cuddling oblivious of the pairs of eyes in a room?

National Geographic notes that "researchers have long hypothesized that people with OCD have a serotonin 'imbalance'."

Donatella Marazziti, a professor of psychiatry at the University of Pisa in Italy, said in the magazine that "the levels of serotonin in both the obsessive's blood and the lovers' blood were 40 percent lower than the normal subjects. Translation: Love and OCD could have similar chemicals."

The magazine writes: "Love and mental illness may be difficult to tell apart," which perhaps explains why people in love sometimes make unwise choices. The high presence of dopamine and norepinephrine can leave people in love sleepless and scatterbrained.

Love fades

How do you explain the "love that fades"? Maybe these studies can stop individuals from blaming themselves when "it didn't work out."

If dopamine is at its high during infatuation, what then causes attraction to wither?

It's not that the voluptuous woman a man married three years ago is no longer attractive to his eyes; or that there is something wrong with you.

National Geographic explains "the reasons romantic love fades may be found in the way our brains respond to the surge and pulse of dopamine that accompanies passion and makes us fly." In other words, the lack of it may be the culprit. Could that chemical also get tired with the sudden rush during the initial stage of falling in love?

This is where oxytocin proves crucial. Goswami writes, "Oxytocin promotes the need to be physically held, have close contact with the mate and makes both the sexes more caring." If you know people who have just celebrated their golden or even diamond wedding anniversary, there might be an abundance of oxytocin to either one of them.

A high level of the chemical endorphins is also thought to be responsible for stable relationships because "they do not induce giddy high, but calmness and stability, hence are the reason people stay married."

So, is there really magic in love? Or everything is also practical? When friends say, "use your head" in choosing a lifelong mate, ask them, "You mean literally?".

Fisher and other experts have not fully explained what love really means, or why people fall in love. All they offer are the activities in the brain when certain feelings or emotions occur and the roles biochemicals play when you get attracted to someone.

Perhaps, that slum book entry is correct after all: Define Love: Love is an unexplained feeling toward someone.

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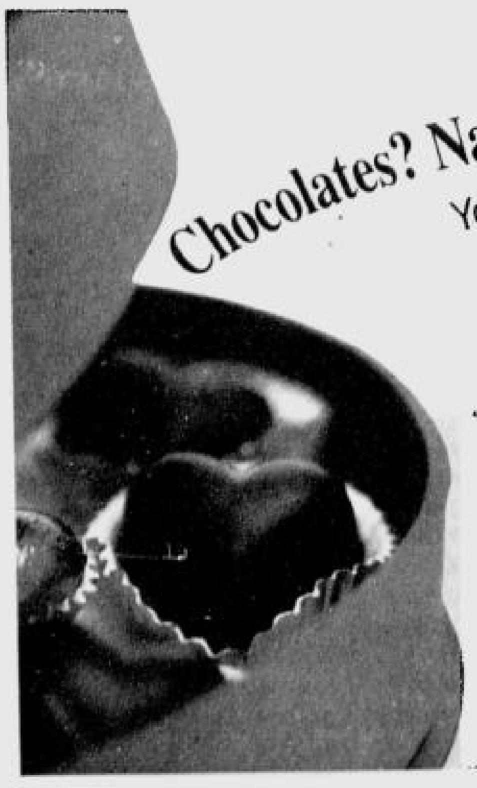

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Couple Spa ...A stimulating treat from Godiva

WHILE OTHERS ARE JACKING UP their prices this Valentine Season, Godiva Skin Station is doing just the opposite. It is giving away 30 percent discounts on Couple Spa!

Now, avail yourself of that perfect Valentine's gift for your beloved as Godiva Skin Station Makati Bel-Air branch offers the sweetest Valentine's treat in town: a 90-minute Couples Massage or Body Scrub with Body Massage for only P1,000. Relax in Godiva Skin Station's private Couples Room and soothe away your stresses with the ultimate Body Massage that combines Swedish, Shiatsu, and Thai massage techniques. Or, you can opt to indulge yourselves with a Body Scrub treat to go with the ultimate Body Massage for that truly enjoyable body pampering experience. Isn't that wonderful?

What do you need to do? Just purchase Godiva Skin Station's Couples Massage or Body Scrub (90-minute) Gift Certificate for only P1,000 at Godiva Skin Station Makati Bel-Air, and you and your partner can move away from the stresses of the world and step into that romantic and intimate haven of relaxation and rejuvenation both of you truly deserve.

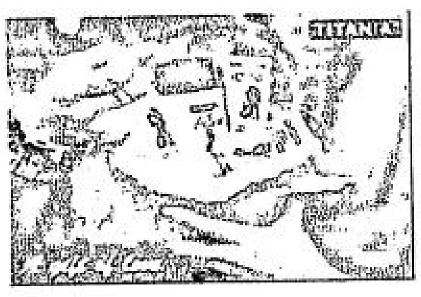
So come on. Celebrate love this Valentine's Day only at Godiva Skin Station, your world-class beauty and wellness haven. For more details, visit Godiva Skin Station Makati Bel-Air Branch, or call 751-6140 or 0917-9649828. Promo runs from Feb. 6 to 14. The Couple Spa Treat is not applicable in conjunction with any other promo of Godiva Skin Station. Advance bookings are required.

The CompanY in a Valentine concert at Brittany Bay

VALENTINE'S DAY FINDS THE COMPANY IN A dinner-concert amidst an outdoor-acoustic setting at Brittany Bay (Sucat). As the balmy breeze of Laguna de Bay gently wafts through, expect an evening of romance (and a bit of mischief) while The CompanY, together with Miss Beth Martinez on the acoustic grand piano, serenade their Valentine audience. Enjoy a delectable dinner prepared by Dencio's Bar and Grill and Grappa's Ristorante. [illegible] highlight of this performance is the debut performance of a ridiculous classical rendition of Black Eyed Pea's international hit - "My Humps" as specially arranged by Miss Annie Nepomuceno for this concert. Escape the monstrous Valentine traffic jams in the city centers and truly enjoy the pleasures of a Valentine's night with The CompanY at Brittany Bay.

Tickets are available at Brittany Bay administration office (839-2425 and 839-2427). The CompanY at Brittany Bay is presented by Brittany Corp, HBC, BMW Autozentrum, Matimco, Nissan Gestrade and Nissan Mantrade.

Ideal gifts for Heart's Day



THIS VALENTINE'S DAY, TREAT YOUR loved ones with only the best. Give them the royal treatment they deserve with the great line of pampering foot products from Titania!

For the women:

- For a hard-working wife, you can treat her with the Titania Vital Foot Bath to revitalize her tired feet, the Titania Pumice Sponge to exfoliate dry skin, and the Titania Softening Lotion for instant moisture replenishment. Its potent and deep acting ingredients are highly absorbent and non-greasy and leaves the hands and feet feeling light and silky.
- For a *kikay* girlfriend, let her know the secrets of maintaining sculptured nails. You can give her a professional-looking pedicure in the comfort of her home as an ultimate treat with the Titania Pedicure Exclusive set. The set offers: a horn-skin Pumice Foot File with two sides—one coarse, and the other fine; a Corn Cutter; a stainless Foot File for better scrubbing; and a Foot Balsam that forms a protective film against the changing weather conditions preventing build up of blisters and sores.

For the men:

- For an athletic husband, having an active lifestyle doesn't have to be a problem. Give him Titania Deodorant Athlete's Foot Soap, Athlete's Foot Protector and Foot Powder, especially for those days the feet need intensive cleansing and protection. They have extra-powerful and active ingredients that fight bacteria.
- For your classical guitarist boyfriend, the Titania Emery Nail File can gently contour his nails to the right shape for that classical performance.

Titania Beauty Care Products give high regard to beauty, not just for personal appearance but for personal hygiene. They are ideal gifts for Heart's Day. Titania is everything for your hands and feet.

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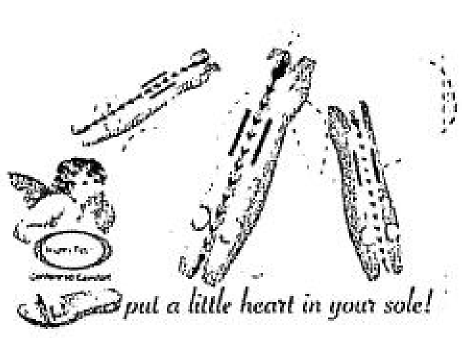
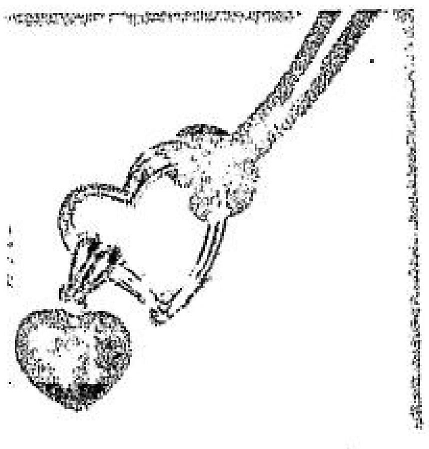
SOLE IN LOVE WITH YOU


put a little heart in your sole!

Be 'sole in love' in this season of hearts with Happy Feet Sandals. Give your loved ones the gift of health that will last them for many years to come. Expertly handmade and crafted with love by Filipino artists, Happy Feet Sandals are caring gifts you can give this Valentine season. With Happy Feet's biomechanically designed footbeds, the toe grips, arch supports and heel cups provide feet the support that most sandals can't. What's more, did you know that every pair of Happy Feet sandals is truly full of love? See for yourself and try out this simple test. Put two soles together, and you will see hearts form in between. This Valentine's, make someone fall head over heels with you with the help of Happy Feet Sandals.

Jewel box of love and life



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Michelis is also launching its new Colours of Love collection this Valentine season with its alluring combinations of rose quartz and pearls; red crystal and rose quartz; turquoise and lapis lazuli, and Marianite will surely put you in the mood for love.

Sterling silver jewelry is a stunning match for every woman. It pulls any look together, regardless of time, date or venue. Like many items of luxury in this day and age, sterling silver is back in demand for its own innate value and its flexibility

Life is too short. Celebrate it. Live it. Let's start in this month of love. Have guests over of the sheer joy of it and don't forget to bring out the good china and the silverware. Wear the good sterling silver jewelry too. Sterling silver is fitting for all of life's occasions. See the silver peeping out from every cloud. Everyday is an extraordinary occasion

DR. P ADULT DIAPERS MAKES THIS DAY MORE SPECIAL

With more and more people enjoying the comfort and security of the leading adult diaper (based on AC Nielsen December Reading) with a very reasonable price, who will not fall more in love with Dr. P? Dr. P has anti-bacteria action that prevents growth of harmful germs. It also has High Speed Channels that evenly distribute liquid across the pad so it does not stay in one place. Plus, its Wetness Indicator will signal the right time to change diapers. Now our loved ones are spared from embarrassing situations, while enjoying the Dr. P Adult Diaper's tender loving care. Dr. P is available at selected leading supermarkets, groceries and drugstores nationwide. Dr. P Adult Diapers is another quality product distributed by JS Unitrade Merchandise Inc.

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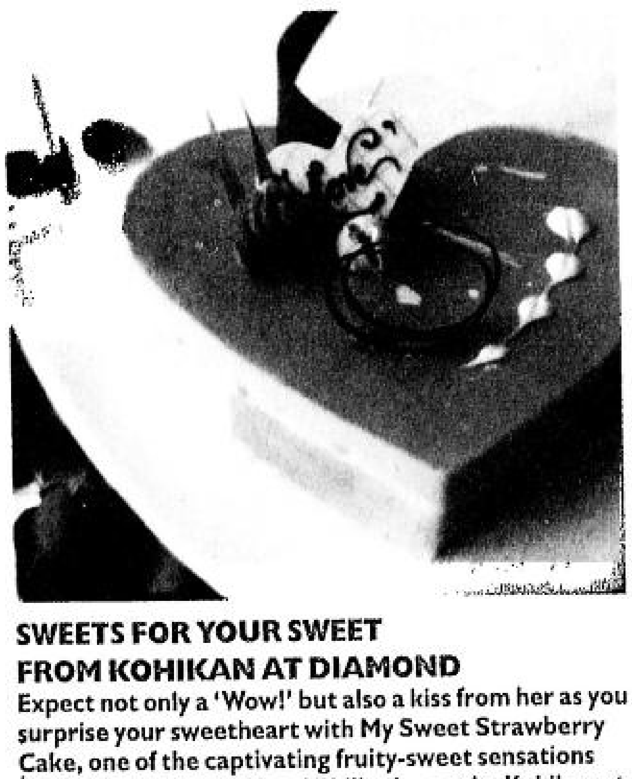

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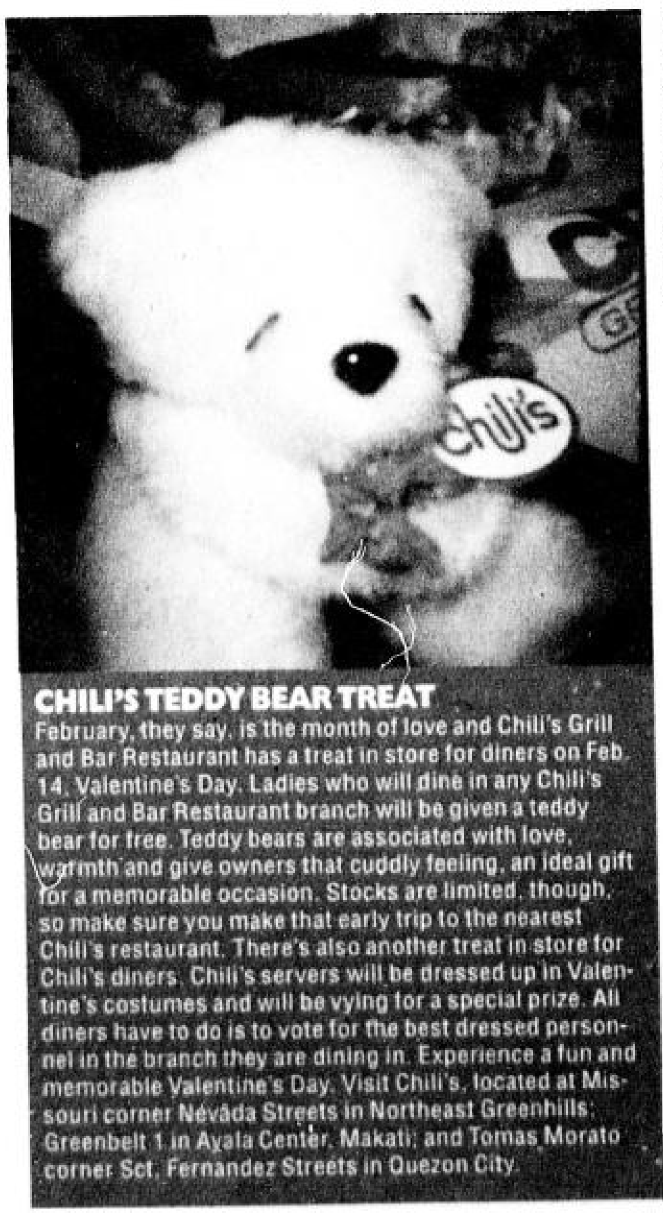

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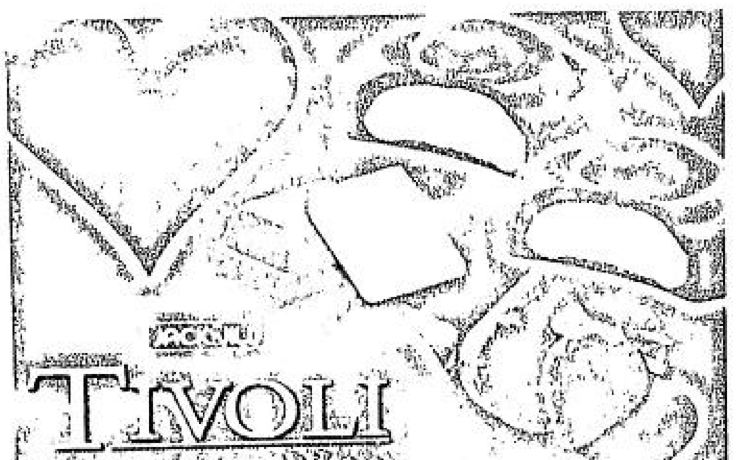

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Couple Spa ...A stimulating treat from Godiva

WHILE OTHERS ARE JACKING UP their prices this Valentine Season, Godiva Skin Station is doing just the opposite. It is giving away 30 percent discounts on Couple Spa!

Now, avail yourself of that perfect Valentine's gift for your beloved as Godiva Skin Station Makati Bel-Air branch offers the sweetest Valentine's treat in town: a 90-minute Couples Massage or Body Scrub with Body Massage for only P1,000. Relax in Godiva Skin Station's private Couples Room and soothe away your stresses with the ultimate Body Massage that combines Swedish, Shiatsu, and Thai massage techniques. Or, you can opt to indulge yourselves with a Body Scrub treat to go with the ultimate Body Massage for that truly enjoyable body pampering experience. Isn't that wonderful?

What do you need to do? Just purchase Godiva Skin Station's Couples Massage or Body Scrub (90-minute) Gift Certificate for only P1,000 at Godiva Skin Station Makati Bel-Air, and you and your partner can move away from the stresses of the world and step into that romantic and intimate haven of relaxation and rejuvenation both of you truly deserve.

So come on. Celebrate love this Valentine's Day only at Godiva Skin Station, your world-class beauty and wellness haven. For more details, visit Godiva Skin Station Makati Bel-Air Branch, or call 751-6140 or 0917-9649828. Promo runs from Feb. 6 to 14. The Couple Spa Treat is not applicable in conjunction with any other promo of Godiva Skin Station. Advance bookings are required.

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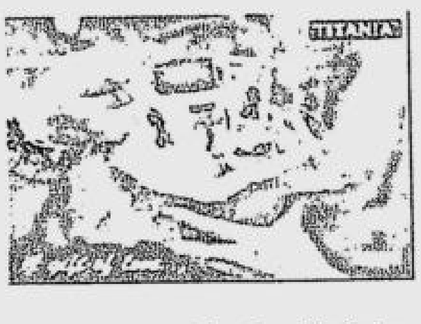

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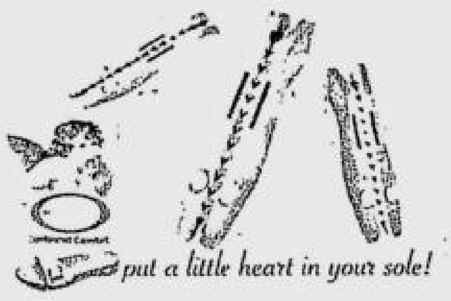

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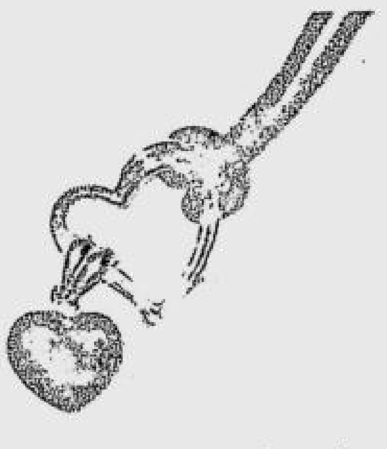

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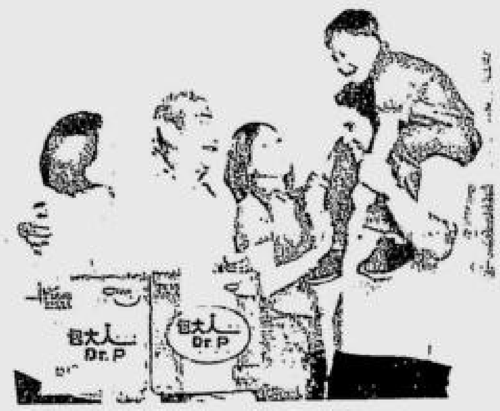

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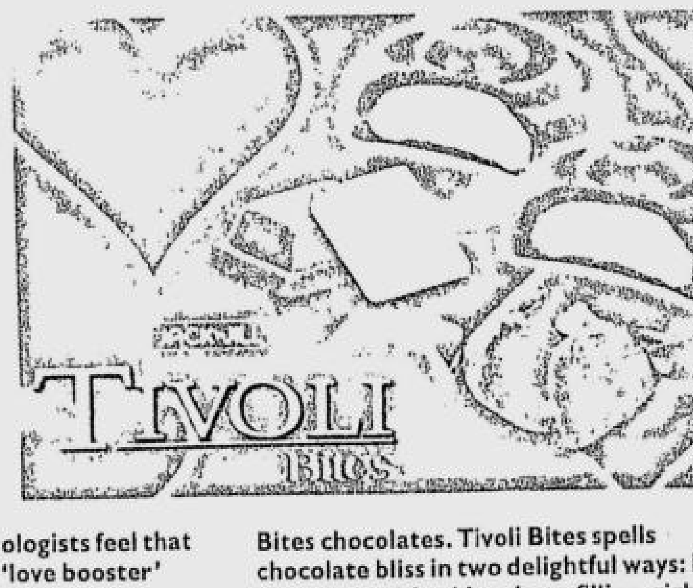

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The space that binds

This love month, space is all you need. Yes, escape from the high-traffic areas and find a place where you and the target of your affection can talk about sweet nothings over a great dinner minus the noise and the rush.

Drive through the Bonifacio Global City and let romance take over at Jaymi's Grill. Jaymi's Grill is a place to go if what you want is an evening of romantic conversations—yes, you can hear everything your companion has to say here so much so that you can put all your thoughts to your conversation amidst the background of the soothing music.

Not only does Jaymi's Grill have the ambiance of feasting in a grand house with high ceilings defined by flowing lines and done in muted shades of classic wood, the mini-golf at Par 43 doubles the far end of the restaurant that is an interesting focal point at the Fort.

Jaymi's Grill's array of dishes include seafood delights, *sisig*, appetizers, beef ribs, chicken, pork, soups, and noodles. Even if you say you'll only take small portions, you will take big servings of some of each meal because they capture your fancy.

The best surprise is that prices at this fine restaurant are not intimidating at all. Seafood costs P300, while combos go no higher than P400. Mango Freeze for dessert costs P99 while appetizers have affordably prized selection of baked *tahong* to crispy *tenga*. For those who want to stay on the safe side, there are lots of grilled dishes. They only use fresh seafood, making for a rather filling meal.

For inquiries and reservations, Call Jaymi's Grill at 887-2709/9887-2741.

Put your best foot forward this V month

FOR THE "IMAGE CONSCIOUS" MAN LIKE you, looking good at every occasion is a must. This season of love, put your best foot forward and enjoy those cozy dinner dates with your special someone with confidence. Start with your choice of shoes. World Balance has a wide array of premium Italian leather shoes exclusively designed for discriminating men like you.

If you're always on the go, there is the weather-resistant Keefe to take you not just from eight to five but beyond.

If your want a bolder look, check out the Portsmouth, which comes in dark brown and dark blue.

Still fascinated with the boatshoes? Why not try the Starwind, an upgraded version of the '80s popular style?

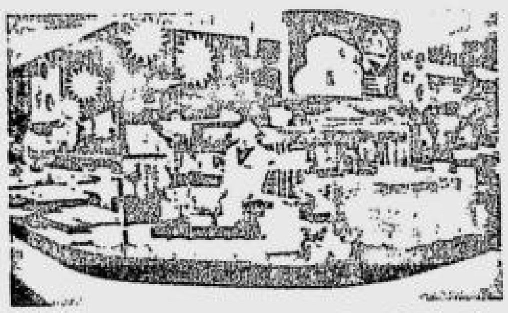
For a more polished look, World Balance Premium Line also comes with casual shoes that are made from shiny leather. Perfect for late afternoon parties and weekend appointments.

One interesting style is the Billfish, a handsome slip-on that can render elegance to any attire. The Prospect, made of all-weather leather and high-grade rubber sole, will look perfect on you, whether you're in slacks or in denims.

Initially available at SM Supermalls, the World Balance Premium casual collection is comparable with the quality and look of foreign labels at a tag that is within reach.

WB Starwind - an upgraded boatshoes version of the '80s popular style.

Love is king at Dads Ultimate Buffet



FOOD IS A WARM, sensual experience. Food is closest to our hearts especially on Valentine's Day, a celebration dedicated to St. Valentine, a physician who was also said to be a gastronomist. He made his medicines more palatable by mixing them with herbs, spices, honey, and wine. The day is also related to the Roman festival of Lupercalia, which was celebrated on Feb. 15. This was a fertility celebration of the Roman god Faunus, the god of flocks and fertility. One custom was for young maidens to write love letters, which would be drawn by unmarried men who subsequently courted the ladies. Most likely, all these stories merged together over the centuries to become the holiday we celebrate today. And food always plays a major part wherever it is celebrated around the world.

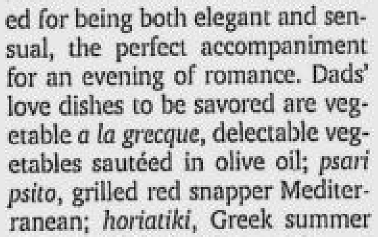
For the Feast of Love, Dads Ultimate Buffet prepares a festival inspired by the land of the great lovers, the birthplace of Casanova, Don Juan, and even Cupid himself. Enjoy the passion and ardor of the Mediterranean Carnival Buffet. Rich in history and legend, the Mediterranean region was long thought of as the heart of the world. Feeding famous poets, artists, and seducers for millennia, Mediterranean cuisine is celebrated for being both elegant and sensual, the perfect accompaniment for an evening of romance. Dads' love dishes to be savored are vegetable *a la grecque*, delectable vegetables sautéed in olive oil; *psari psito*, grilled red snapper Mediterranean; *horiatiki*, Greek summer salad; Mediterranean cake, a chocolate sponge cake with added chocolate butter cream filling and frosting, topped with apricot glaze.

We all know that the quickest way to someone's heart is through their stomachs. And during the Feast of Hearts, what better approach than to fill them with food that they've always loved? The Kamayan Klasiks Buffet gathers together all your beloved all time favorites like *bistek tagalog*, *binusog na pusit*, *bola bola pidada*, *lato* salad and more. Every craving satisfied, every longing fulfilled. Your tummy and tastebuds treated to what you truly desire, a lavish buffet spread wide with Filipino comfort food and fiesta fare that warms the heart and sparks many loving memories.

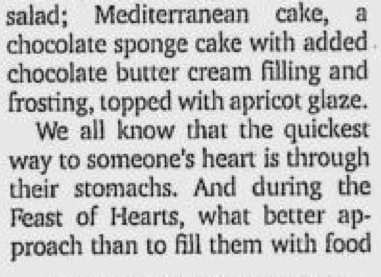
The noble salmon occupies the highest tier in the grand hierarchy of seafood. Salmon has been long regarded as one of the world's most costly and delicately flavored of fishes. In order to survive, the salmon sacrifice their lives for love. Its legendary spawning habits, extreme native habitats, and the distinct pink color of its flesh set it apart from the rest. Great skill is required in its preparation, especially when adhering to the exacting principles of Japanese cuisine, arguably Asia's most sophisticated. This Valentine's Day, Saisaki raises the majestic salmon to its rightful place with the Salmon Festival with dishes like, *shake sanshoku teppan*, vegetable and cheese rolled in salmon; *shake batera*, molded vinegar flavored rice topped with salmon; *shake bou maki*, salmon with lettuce rolled in vinegar flavored rice and dried seaweed.

Food feeds our bodies but love is what feeds our souls. Sharing a special meal together is a time-honored means of expressing that love. It lets our loved ones know that he or she is special too, and deserving of all we have to give. From that sentiment emerges the true spirit of Valentine's Day. Celebrate the ultimate Valentine's Day at Dads!

Dads Ultimate Buffet is priced at P515 and at P415 during promo days, and is available in all Dads branches: SM Megamall, Glorietta III, Alabang TownCenter, Edsa, Padre Faura and West Avenue. For inquiries and reservations call 531-7292 or 532-3004.



BOLA Bola Pidada



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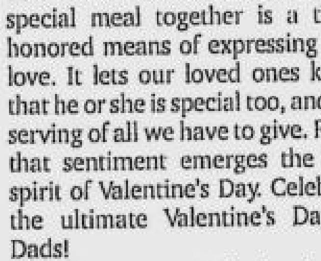
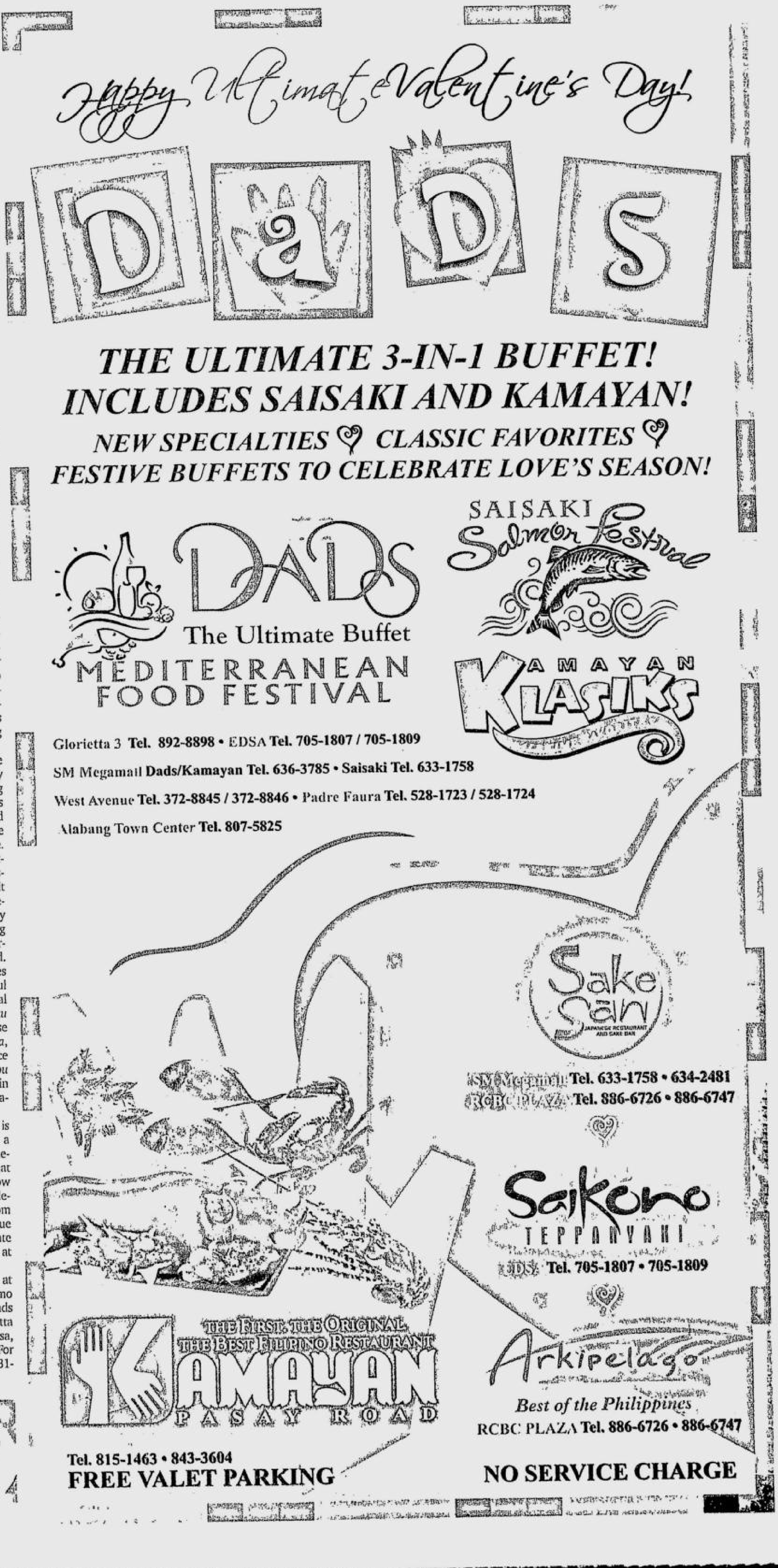


VEGETABLE a la Grecque



Happy Ultimate Valentine's Day!

Dads

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FESTIVE BUFFETS TO CELEBRATE LOVE'S SEASON!

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The Ultimate Buffet
MEDITERRANEAN FOOD FESTIVAL

SAISAKI
Salmon Festival

KAMAYAN
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Check out these exciting activities!

SM City North Edsa

Valentine En Vogue Fashion Show
February 12
Close to You Movie Tour with MYMP
February 12
Valentine En Vogue Love Fair
February 13-16
Quezon City Symphonic Orchestra Serenades You with Love
February 14
Dress-a-Heart Awarding
February 14
Closer to Sam Milby
February 19

SM City Fairview

Joy Quartet - February 12
Valentine Special Coffee Festival
February 12-14
Acoustic Performance of Palceto with photo opp
February 13-14
EM 7 - February 14
Dress-a-Heart Awarding
February 14

SM City Manila

Valentine photo opp
February 12-13
U-Turn Valentine Mini Concert
February 14
Cupid Mimes
February 14
Dress-a-Heart Awarding
February 14

SM Supercenter Valenzuela

Love Quotes
February 12-17
Valentine Photo Mosaic
(First 100 participants will get freebies)
February 12-28
Bb. Valenzuela Pre-Pageant
February 14
Dress-a-Heart Awarding
February 14
Healthy Heart, Healthy Life
February 15

SM City San Lazaro

Love Fair
February 14
Tenant Cluster Fair
February 12-14
Dress-a-Heart Awarding
February 14

SM Megamall

Tenant Cluster Exhibit
February 13-14
Megahearts Celebration
-Coffee Lounge (Gloria Jeans and Cafe Xokolate)
-Grand Piano Show by TRIWORLD
-Photo Opportunity
(Megahearts Day by YKL and Blue Magic)
-Classic Music Fest by JBL and Brain Audio Video
February 13-14
Brazilian Quartet - February 14
Dress-a-Heart Awarding
February 14

SM City Sta. Mesa

Celebrity Dating Game
February 12
Valentine photo opp
February 12-14
Dress-a-Heart Awarding
February 14

SM City Bicutan

Acoustic Strings
February 12-13
Love Fair
February 12-17
Marmalade
February 14
Valentine Singing Duet Contest
February 14
Dress-a-Heart Awarding
February 14
In Love with Shopping Fashion Show
February 19

SM City Sucat

Little Big Star
February 12
Show Band and Cupid Mimes
February 14
Dress-a-Heart Awarding
February 14

SM Southmall

Love Fair
February 13-17
Browns Jazz Quartet
February 14
Rhythm on Four Band
February 14
Dress-a-Heart Awarding
February 14
Palceto Band
February 16
E-Minor 7 Band
February 17

SM City Bacoor

Love Fair
February 13-16
Dress-a-Heart Awarding
February 14

SM City Dasmarinas

Valentine Special featuring U Turn Band
February 12, Centermall, 4pm
Love...Sweet Love!
February 13-14, 10 am onwards
Valentine Musical Special
February 13-14, Centermall, 4pm
Dress-a-Heart Awarding
February 14

SM Supercenter Molino

A Valentine Treat from Nyoy Volante
February 12
Love is in the Air
(A Classical Music Concert)
February 13-15
Dress-a-Heart Awarding
February 14

SM City Batangas

Straight from the Heart, pre-Valentine show by the Serenata Music School and Talent Center
February 12, Entertainment Plaza, 4pm
String Ensembles, Valentine ambience
February 13-14, Mall Area, 11am, 2pm, 4pm
Sandara Park and Joseph Bitangcol mall show and Dress-a-Heart Awarding
February 14, Entertainment Plaza, 4pm
Red Night Street Party with Kris Lawrence (Open Parking Concert)
February 18, Open Parking Area, 7pm
Dress-a-Heart Awarding
February 14

SM City Pampanga

QTV 11 Fam Jam Mall Tour
February 12, Entertainment Plaza, 10am
Valentine Concert with Jimmy Bondoc
February 13, Entertainment Plaza, 4pm
Valentine's Day Concert with Jimmy Bondoc
February 14, 11 am onwards
Valentine's Day Musical String Quartet
February 14, 6pm
Dress-a-Heart Awarding
February 14
Red Night Street Party with Orange and Lemons at the Fiesta Strip
February 18, Fiesta Strip, 7pm

SM City Lucena

My Funny Valentine with Pekto
February 12, Entertainment Plaza, 4pm
Love Notes: A Musical Valentine
February 13-14, Entertainment Plaza
Dress-a-Heart Awarding
February 14
Hearty Party with R&B Princess Kyla "No-date-required" Streetparty
February 18, Open Parking, 7pm

SM City Marilao

Jessa and Dingdong Mall Tour
February 12
Pre-Valentine's Celebration of Dr. Yanga College DYCI 56th Foundation Day
February 13
Tenant Cluster Selling
February 14
Dress-a-Heart Awarding
February 14

SM City Baguio

Tenant Cluster Activities
February 12-14
Valentines Special with Symmetry Band
February 14
Dress-a-Heart Awarding
February 14

SM City Cebu

Storyland Fun Park Bake Art
February 12
Geneva Cruz Mall Tour
February 14
Dress-a-Heart Awarding
February 14

SM City Davao

A Heart to Heart Valentine's Concert featuring The Chamber Ensemble
February 14, Entertainment Plaza, 4pm
Dress-a-Heart Awarding
February 14

SM City Iloilo

Love Duets
February 12, 3rd Floor
Valentine's Corner
February 12-14, Lower Ground Floor, near Toy Kingdom
Tata Villaruel mall tour
February 14, 3rd Floor
Live Radio Broadcast
February 14, Lower Ground Floor, near Toy Kingdom
Dress-a-Heart Awarding
February 14

SM City Cagayan de Oro

Al Fresco Dinin' and Lovin', Acoustic and String Performances by Upstart and Stitch
February 12-14, Front Covered Walk, 7pm
Strings of Love pre-Valentine Show
February 12-13, Activity Center, 5pm
Special Valentine's Concert with Sheryn Regis
February 14, Activity Center, 6pm
Dress-a-Heart Awarding
February 14

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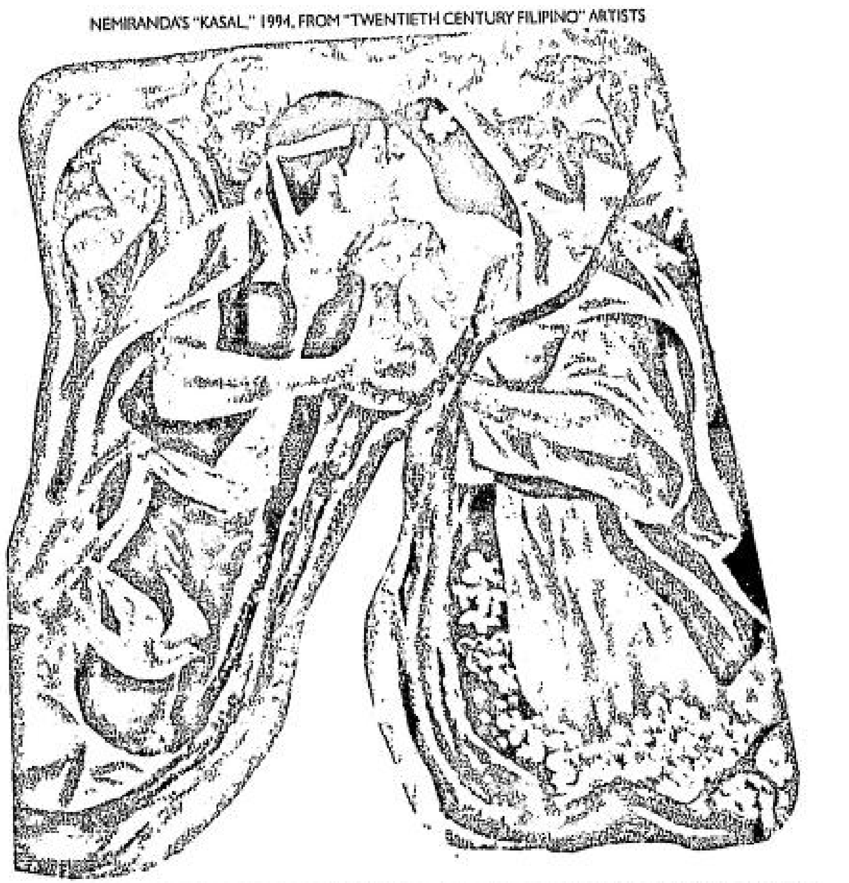
Love's reality check

There are no telltale signs, chemistry, or even magic involved for couples to determine or ascertain that their relationship will last a lifetime. Lasting relationship is all hard work

NEMIRANDA'S "KASAL," 1994, FROM "TWENTIETH CENTURY FILIPINO" ARTISTS



By Raquel P. Gomez

BOY MEETS GIRL. BOY GETS THE GIRL IN THE end. And despite the obviousness that the lovers belong to the extreme poles of realities or possess conflicting natures, both live happily ever after. The music climaxes, the curtains close. It's the end of a beautiful love story. Sigh.

Love, or whatever romantic notion we often associate with it, has always revolved around the same old story. The heart-rending plot, the sweet and rosy atmosphere, the beautiful endings of every love story magnified to us by romance books and movies and those Korean *telenovelas* never fail to fascinate us. This fascination is so much that our romantic notion of love spills over to reality.

But does love in the real world reflect our notion of a happily-ever-after romantic love or a lasting relationship among couples?

Lory Cipriano, senior counselor at the Center for Family Ministries Foundation Inc (Cefam) in Ateneo de Manila University, says couples cannot really predict a happy and lasting marriage or relationship.

She says there are no telltale signs, chemistry, or even magic involved for couples to determine or ascertain that their relationship will last a lifetime.

"Just imagine two individuals reared differently by two sets of parents choose to live (together) for a lifetime. Marriage is a roller coaster thing. I mean there's a heaven and there's hell and back," says Cipriano, who has been married for 34 years.

Cipriano, who has been counseling couples, married and those contemplating marriage, since 1991, says a lasting relationship such as in a married life is something for couples to seriously strive for.

"A lasting marriage is something to labor and work for. As an individual, if you wish to better your life or yourself, you work hard to attain your goal. Setting a goal of wanting to have a happy marriage is something you work towards. It's a conscious effort guided by the will and not by feelings or emotions."

The "Romeo and Juliet" affair or couples coming from different backgrounds and sharing a thousand dissimilarities is a common reality, but there is a high incidence that this type of relationship is headed for disaster.

Cipriano says there are many compatibility issues couples need to iron out first before ever attaining that ideal dream of marital peace and bliss. And this is basically what Cefam does. Through its seminars and counseling, couples are made to see and understand the realities of marriage. They are made to know and understand each other before they ever plunge into this lifetime eventuality called marriage.

Cipriano says there are prevailing issues among couples coming from different family backgrounds, economic backgrounds, and even educational backgrounds.

"For someone who's not so educated then decides to marry a very intelligent and educated person, there's already the tendency of that person to work out his or her self-esteem against his or her partner. You can already see trouble coming."

"If a person with low self-esteem or unhealthy self-esteem enters a marriage, his or her line of defense will always be to build up against his or her partner. There's insecurity already."

Different family backgrounds can cause conflict in the future of the couple. Cipriano says family backgrounds of each partner should be examined thoroughly.

"How was the person brought up? What were his or her *lolo* and *lola* like? How did his or her parents show love, affection or anger in the family? Who are the significant people in his or her family that he or she admire and why? These are certain things that the person can bring into his or her relationship later on."

Cipriano says a person has expectations about his or her marriage. This is culled in a marriage inventory, where every aspect of married life is covered—money matters, religion, children, in-laws, sex. At a Cefam seminar, when the couple is made to respond to the marriage inventory, each would most often post a different answer from the other.

"That's the time we counsel them on how they will settle their differences. For example, we ask the couple if they want a joint account or not. They will respond to having separate accounts. Right away, we see a division already. So we'd tell them, how will they handle the finances at home or when the babies arrive?"

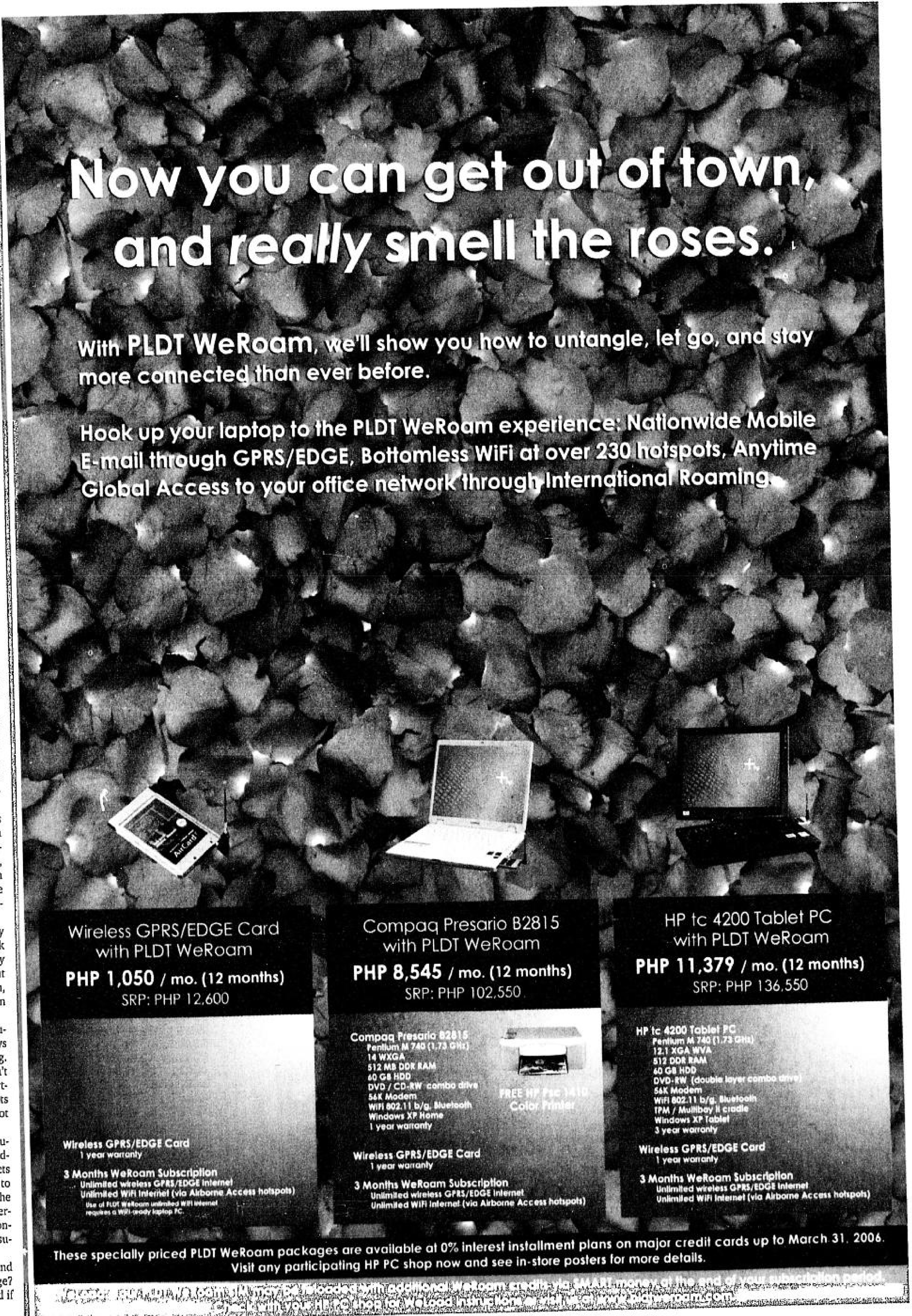
Cipriano says there's also the extreme infatuation that couples should watch out for. She says the "love-is-blind" concept is a dangerous thing. "The person is so in love that he or she doesn't see the defects or negative aspects of the partner. The person is willing to forego these defects of the partner in the name of love. This is not genuine or authentic love."

There are stages in the courtship of a couple—physical attraction, dating, and then deciding to get married despite the negative aspects the couple see in each other —according to Cipriano. But the most important factor, she says, is the time devoted to get to know the person really well. "Some people just enter relationships or marriages very quickly. Look what usually happens to them?"

When should a couple head for marriage and at least attain that happily-ever-after stage? Cipriano says a person is ready to get married if he or she thinks of himself or herself less.

"We don't say marriage is nice and all beauty. In fact, when you undergo the Cefam seminar, one thing will certainly happen. Either you push through with the marriage, postpone the marriage because there are still some things that you're in doubt with, or totally cancel because you don't think you can live with that person for life."

"Couples are so different individually. But how much of that 'difference' can they integrate and accept in the marriage? It's difficult to do but it can be done. So when the basic selfishness comes away, then the person is on the road to maturity."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Offer valid up to Mar 31, 2006. See fliers for details. Per DTI-NCR Permit No. 0505 Series of 2006

Love Month Specials at *The Diamond*

VALENTINE'S DAY CELEBRATIONS CAN come in many exciting ways— whether you spend it in a luxurious hotel which allows you to enjoy its comfortable amenities; or just have an intimate fine-dining experience; or just simply hang out and enjoy the moment with your loved one while listening to soulful songs which bring back memories of your young love. Diamond Hotel Philippines is just the place to go whatever your style or budget.

You can celebrate early by availing yourself of Diamond's room specials offered the whole month of February: Superior room overnight accommodation at P5,100++ or P8,500++ for two consecutive nights; executive suite package at P8,100++ overnight or P15,000++ for two consecutive nights. Both come with complimentary sparkling wine and truffles and buffet breakfast for two.

You also get a chance to win an overnight accommodation gift certificate with buffet breakfast, in the Valentine's Day dinner raffle at either the Restaurant le Bellevue or Palm Court Café; or go for Valentine's Day cocktails at the Sky Lounge Music Bar.

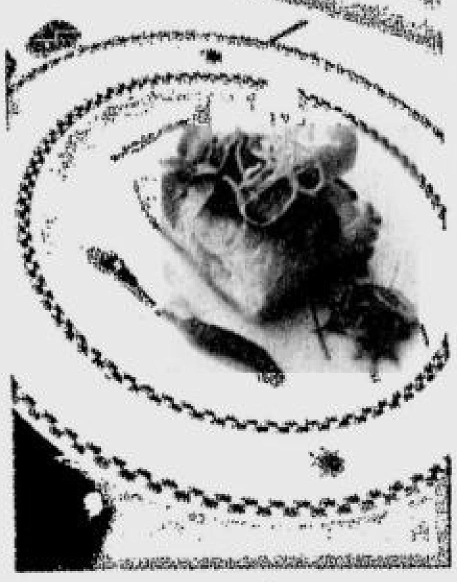
Palm Court Café's Valentine's dinner at P1,100++ per person offers the best value, with its almost unlimited number of selections for the honest-to-goodness food tripper.

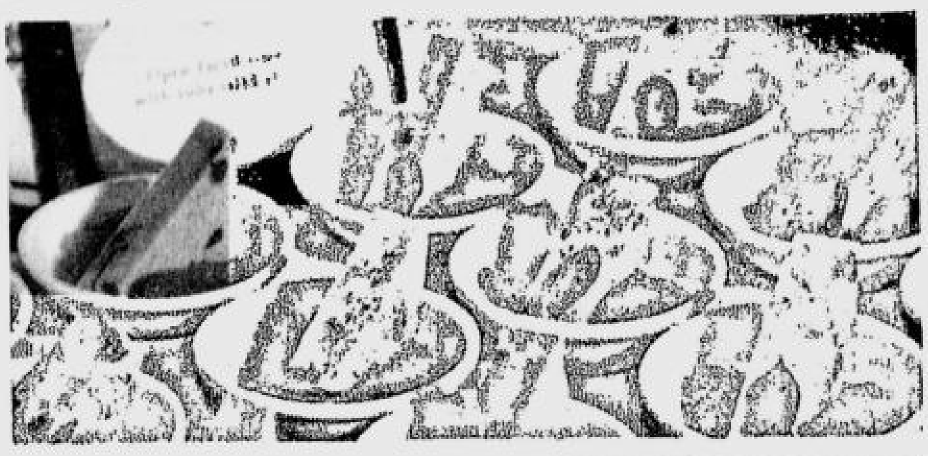
If you are one of those hopeless romantics who celebrate Valentine's Day with reverence, then the hotel's Restaurant Le Bellevue is just the choice. This fine-dining restaurant specializes in delectable Euro-Continental Cuisine and is famous for its breathtaking view, exquisite ambience, and heavenly dishes. Diamond spices these up with live string quartet entertainment, plus a long-stemmed rose for your lady guest. Pure cloud-nine experience at just P1985++ per person.

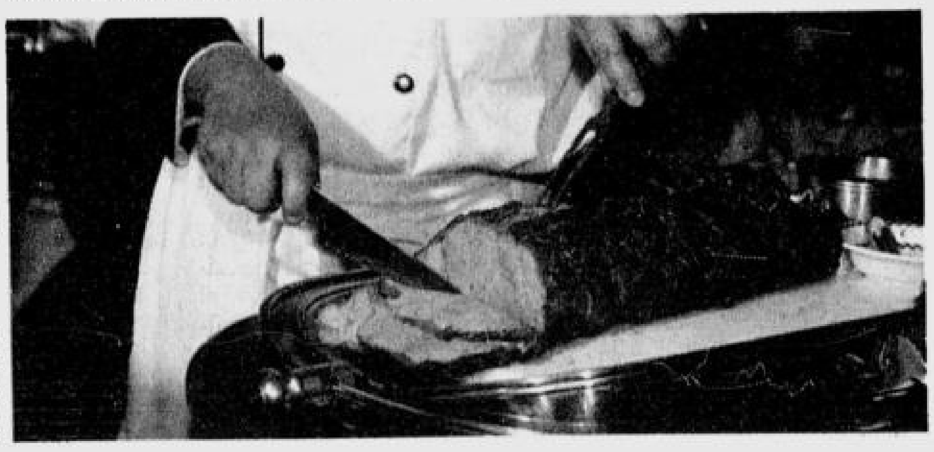
Meanwhile, if you're in the mood for live musical entertainment on Valentine's Day, come to Diamond's Sky Lounge Music Bar. Its P400 net per person entitles you to a standard drink. Live entertainment starts at 8:30 p.m.

If you prefer to spend Valentine's in a quiet romantic place, then visit the Kohikan at the Diamond for some light selections. Bring home My Sweet Strawberry Cake for P1000; or try its special February smoogee, Strawberry Yogurt, which for only P450 comes with a complimentary cute stuffed toy.

When you dine on Valentine's day at Le Bellevue or Palm Court Café, or have cocktails at the Sky Lounge Music Bar, just drop in your calling card or write your name on a piece of paper to qualify you for the individual restaurant raffles. Call Diamond Hotel Philippines at 528-3000 for more details.







Stuff-Me Bear: Stuffed with love

STUFFED TOYS WILL NEVER BE LOVED THE SAME way again. Founder Beryl Tanenglian has brought the Philippines a new way to find furry friends who will accompany us in good and bad times. Beryl, a toy connoisseur, studied the Philippine toy market extensively and discovered that stuffed toys were being sold like shampoos or shoes yet were loved like best friends. Old stuffed toys are cherished, protected and occupies special parts of our hearts, while other old things easily find their way out of our homes.

The vacuum had to be filled with care, love and friendship. And so, Stuff Me Bear was born. A new way of finding our best furry friends came to life and scores of new relationships have been born ever since. The Philippines has warmly welcomed Stuff Me Bear as the pioneer in this unique way of finding our furry friends.

We love the ones we stuff and so will you.

Teddy bears are a universal symbol of love, comfort, security and friendship. In our childhood, teddy bears are our quiet, warm companions—good listeners who are never critical and always reassuring. They are our bear-shaped security blankets, who keep us warm at night and protect us from harm and dark days. As we grow older, they come to symbolize romance, love and all the warm fuzzy feelings that fill our days. When we reach adulthood, teddy bears became symbols of nostalgia, that allows a small part of each of us to remain a child forever. At all stages of life, teddy bears have shared confidences and have been dragged, wagged, hugged, squeezed and slept with over the years. The memories they hold and memories that they will bring make them our truest best friend, becoming more treasured with the passing time.

Stuff-Me Bear offers an interactive entertainment retail experience based on the enduring love and friendship that connects us all to stuffed animals and especially to our teddy bears. Its unique and exceptional approach to purchasing special stuffed toys is the first of its kind in the Philippines. The store carries the teddy bear theme and hosts warm and well-trained staff to guide our special ones through the process of bringing their furry friends to life.

The following segments are those that shoppers go through to bring their furry friends to life. Each one offers a "beary" unique experience that will be cherished by our loved ones for years to come.

Choose Me

At Choose Me, guests are introduced to the furry characters in the store and select one, which soon become their new furry friend. The wide selection comprises of bears, monkeys, rabbits, dogs, cats, pigs for now and more to come.

Hear Me

At Hear Me, guests can record their own 10-second message on a sound chip that is placed inside their stuffed animal to further personalize their new friend. The sound chip is inserted safely inside the plush during the stuffing time.

Stuff Me

At Stuff Me, bear stuffers fill the new friend with stuffing for just the right amount of huggability. A very special step also happens at this station called Heart. Each guest selects a small heart, adds to it his or her own love and wishes and carefully places it inside their new furry friend. This stage offers a heart melting experience, whether you're a man, woman, boy or girl.

Stitch Me

At Stitch Me, the last seam is neatly pulled shut, nearly completing each new best friend.

Fluff Me

At Fluff Me, the guest brushes the animal to make his or her new friend perfectly fluffed.

Name Me

At Name Me, guests stop at the station computer, where they answer several questions about their furry friend, including the birth date and of course, the name of their new furry friend. This information is complied and becomes part of a personalized birth certificate for the guest to take home.

Dress Me

At Dress Me, the guest may dress their new friend in the "beary" latest furry fashions. The bear apparel boutique features clothes and accessories for all occasions. Guests are able to express the true personality of their new best friend by choosing from the wide selection of outfits and accessories. Just like human counterparts, furry fashions change seasonally, so there is always something new in store. Furry friends make wonderful gifts for every occasion because guests can make a gift as unique as the recipient.

Take Me Home

Finally, guests conclude their bear-making adventure at the Take Me Home station, where they are given their customized birth certificate. Every new friend is then placed in their very own homes, which also serves as a carrying case. These cases were specially designed as a handy travel carrier and a new home for their friend.

Pamper your partner today

THIS VALENTINE'S, JUN ARIEM OF Style Trend 33 Salon shares the hottest look —full bangs, texturized look, hair tints (tobacco brown is in).

"Our clients are more on the adventurous side, most of them were asking for what's in this 2006. Of course, we give what they want but we make sure that the latest style fits their personality and lifestyle," says Jun who heads Style Trend 33, the newest one-stop haven for beauty and well-being in Timog, Quezon City.

Style Trend 33 is a three-story center that is becoming the favorite hang-out of those who want a quick beauty fix before hitting the night spots in the area.

Style Trend 33, however, is basically for everyone, not just for Timog or Tomás Morato partygoers but for nearby residents who are looking for an affordable venue to entrust their beauty needs, and also for couples who would want to look good together as they party. Behind the salon's glass façade with cascading water effect is a team of beauty experts warmly working in a place that depicts sophistication.

Notwithstanding the elite ambience and premium service, Style Trend 33's rates are reasonable, which explains its growing popularity among men and women of all ages, according to Ariem.

"We want our clients to look good and feel good the moment they step in the salon and this means providing them with excellent services using first-rate products minus the burden of paying too much," says Jun who has been in the salon industry for close to 20 years now.

Jun takes pride in Style 33's full range of services, from hair care to skin care. On the first level of the salon is the Hair Department, where the latest hairstyles and coloring trends come to life.

On the second level is the Skincare Department, where clients can enjoy rejuvenating facial and body care treatments using imported formulations. Count on Style 33's skin care specialists to advise you on the best skin enhancement services.

One level up is the Massage Area manned by well-trained therapists to soothe your tired body. The massage services also come with free use of wet and dry sauna, with unlimited complimentary drinks of your choice to complete the relaxing experience.

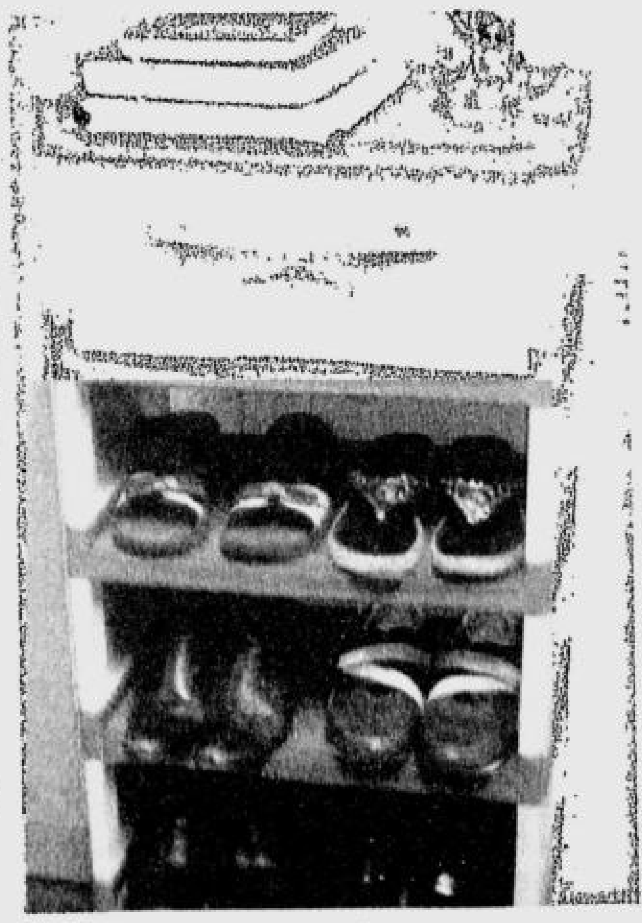
Style Trends 33-Timog is the second beauty shop owned by Style Trend Corp. The first branch, which opened early 2005, is located at 2nd floor of Atrium Building along Makati Avenue in Makati City. The Timog Branch was immediately put up a few months later following the overwhelming patronage of discriminating customers for Style Trend 33 in Makati.

Visit Style Trend 33 at 33D Ignacia Building, Timog Avenue, Quezon City and discover the best way to pamper yourself from head to toe. For inquiries or reservations, call 411-7185 or 0921-3527755.

FOOD PASSION AT CAFE ADRIATICO

Get a dose of love at Cafe Adriatico Premiere (Malate) and Cafe Adriatico Westgate's Italian Romance. Delight your soul with its superb art in food passion this Valentine's Day. For only P495+ per person, get a complete set menu from appetizer to dessert. A sample menu includes a choice of minestone con pesto or classic Italian hearty vegetable soup; choice of paradiso/fresh garden greens with red beets, marinated white cheese, cucumber, and tomatoes, for starters. For the main course, there is a choice of 'pollo alla diavola' (grilled chicken with rosemary, garlic, and light chillies) or tenderloin with mushroom marsala sauce or scampi palermo with potato fritata and verdure assortite all'agro. And finally, tiramisu. All of these served with coffee or tea. Cafe Adriatico Premiere is at 1790 M. Adriatico Street, Remedios Circle, Malate, Manila (523-7924); Cafe Adriatico Westgate Central Precinct, Westgate Center, Filinvest Corporate City, Alabang Muntinlupa City (771-1281). For Cafe Ariatico Gateway, Eastwood and Cebu, you get a choice of soup or salad, main course, and dessert for only P425+.

A handy gift from Orocan



THE MOST ROMANTIC GIFT THIS Valentine's Day is that which reflects the thought behind the season—a simple, well thought of gift which is a fitting symbol of our high regard for our loved ones. The trick is finding such a gift that need not be heavy on the pocket.

The availability of Orocan's all-new multi-layered shoe rack comes in very timely. For sure, your recipients would appreciate the unique and functional features of Orocan's shoe rack. Where else can they find a shoe rack that has a spacious drawer to conveniently keep their socks and other shoe paraphernalia? There's also a table top where they can put their knick- knacks.

Orocan's shoe rack has four layers of sturdy shelves to organize their shoes and sandals. The shelves are also spacious that there's always space for another new pair.

Orocan's innovative shoe rack is definitely a fitting gift for everyone. Grab one and spread the message of love this Valentine's.

Easy shopping at myFlowerShop

WANT TO AVOID THE VALENTINE'S DAY RUSH? Buying flowers on the Internet may just be for you.

MyFlowerShop.com.ph takes the concept of your neighborhood florist online and right into your home or office.

myFlowerShop manager Virginia Braga said the website combines the efficiency and convenience of Internet shopping with the old-fashioned charm of giving flowers as gifts. The country's first fully online flower shop—one that has no physical store but is operational 24 hours a day and stocked with fresh flowers and gift products—was created by the team at myAyala.com last year.

Instead of ordering floral arrangements from international websites or going around the city looking for a flower stand, customers can simply visit www.myflowershop.com.ph. The new website offers at least a hundred products at prices at par with traditional florists and delivers to major cities and provinces nationwide.

"Shopping for flowers online need not be expensive", says Braga. "On the contrary, we are able to offer very competitive prices because being online allows us to be more cost-efficient. We even waive delivery charges for orders sent to the Greater Metro Manila Area."

The website provides the option to customize each package by including a message or adding items like chocolates. "We help customers put their 'trademark' on their gift with these extra details," Braga says.

Payment options include credit and debit cards, as well as Globe's G-Cash payment facility.

For more information, visit www.myflowershop.com.ph.

'That's Amore' at Segafredo Zanetti

LOVE IS IN THE AIR AT Segafredo Zanetti espresso bar. It's the place where you don't just get luscious food (Italian and fusion), Segafredo boasts a very romantic overall ambiance well suited for the Valentine season. Cap the evening with a choice of different espresso blends, which is Europe's finest.

That's not all. Segafredo recently had a Valentine's treat for everyone—"That's Amore." Held from Jan. 23 to Feb. 12, diners with a minimum P1,000 single receipt purchase at Segafredo Greenbelt or a P500 single receipt purchase at The Podium store were qualified to join the contest. An array of prizes: Segafredo gift cheques, vodka from Maxxium Singapore, bottles of wine from Wine Direct and Espa-Fil, Nestle ice cream and San Miguel premium items, were offered. Those who qualified dropped off their business cards in the bar's designated fish bowl. Prizes may be picked up from Feb. 14 until the 28th.

To top everyone's dreamy Valentine, Segafredo's "That's Amore" will be filled with scrumptious food and echoes of love with the music of accordionist Sam Lumbardo on Feb. 14 and 15.

Speaking of love, coffee lovers will surely enjoy coffee even more at Segafredo. With Segafredo's coffee card, "coffeephiles" will get a free cup of their favorite hot espresso after the 10th hot espresso purchase made at any Segafredo outlet. Not only that, they will also get VIP treatment with Segafredo's lifestyle card, which will entitle them to a 10-percent discount on orders of food and drinks.

Besides the authentic Italian espresso, Segafredo has a variety of thin-crusted pizzas and al dente pastas which are definitely *excellente*. Further beefing up the tasty menu is an ambrosial assortment of rice dishes, unforgettable selections of cakes, pastries, wines and spirits.

For inquiries, call the Greenbelt store at 757-4058 and Podium at 633-3421.

Gifts of love at The Podium

SOME THINGS NEVER CHANGE and in this cyber age, the cache of jewelry as a love token is as fresh and timeless as ever. If you're looking for that pearl of great price, gorgeous gems or fashionista's accessory, you can find these at The Podium's new premier jewelry stores—Jewelmer, Vanafi, Hoseki, Silver Finds, Miladay and Morellato.

Since it began 26 years ago, Jewelmer has shown the world the beauty and luster of Philippine South Sea Pearls. "Every Filipina should wear pearls," says marketing manager Daniela Fenix. "It's a symbol of our national identity and pride.

Jewelmer's pearl jewelry pieces are both classic and classy with just a hint of modernity. This Valentine's, try out pearls in gold and champagne colors, or take a pick from its Studs Promotion from Feb. 6 to 26. Jewelmer acknowledges that studs are essential in every woman's personal collection, and is offering pearl studs at affordable prices for today's woman on the go.

Hoseki, which also highlights South Sea Pearls, is a creative collaboration among three globally recognized designers—Fai Co, Charmaine Ng, and Knoi Esmane. Since it was established 10 years ago, the store has evolved from offering classic to more contemporary jewelry.

Pearls are seen in a different light in Hoseki's showroom in The Podium, and customers can now choose from four different collections to match their personalities. These include Eden for nature's beauty and colors; Urban Zen for minimalism; Geometric for the big, bold and beautiful—a combination of architecture and jewelry design; and New Baroque, which beautifully merges metallics with pearls. Highly recommended this Valentine is the Urban Zen collection's Ai Love You necklace, which has a Chinese character (meaning I Love You) as a pendant.

Vanafi, on the other hand, offers top-of-the-line jewelry from some of the world's best-known brands known for their elegant yet modern designs—Pomelatto, Damiani and Lalique. The shop also has its inhouse brand, the Vanafi line, which is a standout by itself.

As a gift of love, "people buy jewelry because of its intangible qualities," says Vanessa Figueroa, the dynamic lady behind Vanifi, who is the fifth generation in a family long known in the jewelry business. "Whether it is happiness, prestige, hope or love—only the owner will know." This Valentine, Vanafi's heart-shaped jewelry pieces make presents perfect.

Miladay is another jewelry store that has become a byword in the industry. Founded by the late Ting and Mila Dayrit in the late '60s, it is now run by their daughter Michelle Dayrit Soliven, Miladay president.

This Valentine, Miladay offers Power of Love, a special line lovingly designed by skilled artisans using white, yellow or two-tone combinations with little diamond brills. These brilliant brands include friendship, engagement, celebration and love yourself rings.

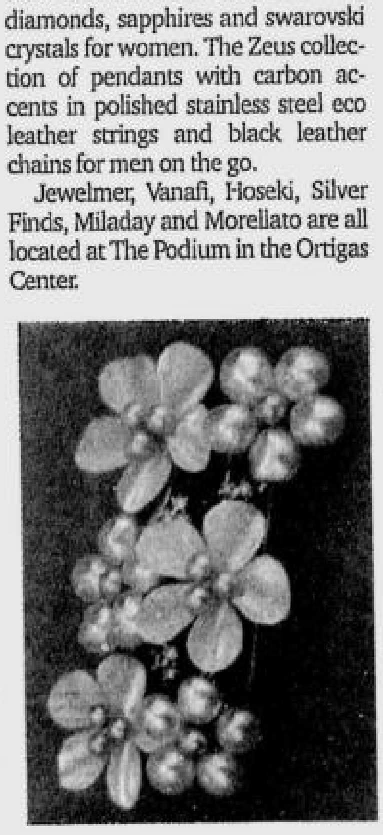
Silver Finds, on the other hand, specializes in 92.5 silver pieces with precious stones and crystals. Nini Magsino and Rica Rodis, who are behind the successful Asian Finds clothes and accessories store, thought of putting up a separate store for their jewelry, much of which is specially hand made.

The ethnic Orientalia image is very much felt in the store, with its best sellers including Indian inspired accessories; semi precious pieces in blue topaz, garnet, rubies, and turquoise, heart shaped dangling earrings, and hand made silver necklaces and bracelets. This Valentine's, check out handcrafted silver necklaces and bracelets for women, and silver pendants for men.

Morellato, meanwhile, is a trendy Italian brand founded by Guilio Morellato. Targeting a young, hip clientele, it has outlets in Europe, Asia and the United States.

For Valentine's, Morellato suggests its Amore, Scintille, Cupido and Harmony collections of easy-to-wear stainless steel combined with diamonds, sapphires and swarovski crystals for women. The Zeus collection of pendants with carbon accents in polished stainless steel eco leather strings and black leather chains for men on the go.

Jewelmer, Vanafi, Hoseki, Silver Finds, Miladay and Morellato are all located at The Podium in the Ortigas Center.



Romantic dinner at Teak Bistro

AFTER THE HEARTS AND FLOWERS, VALENTINE'S DAY MEANS A romantic dinner at Teak Bistro at Rockwell. Come dine at Teak Bistro as Chef Ed prepares a lovely menu that starts with a Tagaytay Greens Salad with Smoked Salmon and Pate. Thereafter comes Cream of Carrot and Cauliflower Soup, followed by the Menage, a prawn and chicken fricasse with wild rice and vegetable risotto. This course culminates to Cupid, a heart-shaped chocolate pizza with fresh strawberries and chili flakes. All these plus half a caraffe of rose for P1,950++ for two, tonight at dinner time. For reservations, call 898-3365 or 898-3429.

Suite Valentine treats at Linden Suites

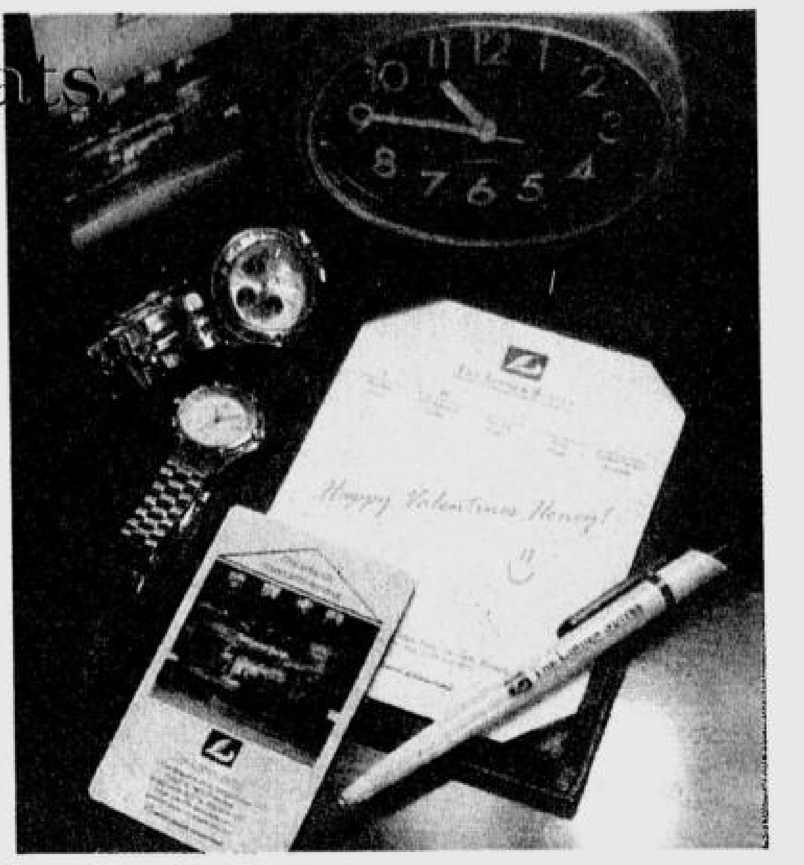
A BOTTLE OF SWEET FRENCH wine, A romantic dinner for two inside the room, sweet love songs to set the mood and breakfast in bed the morning after. Savor these plus the romantic ambience of your luxurious suite as you celebrate love at The Linden Suites.

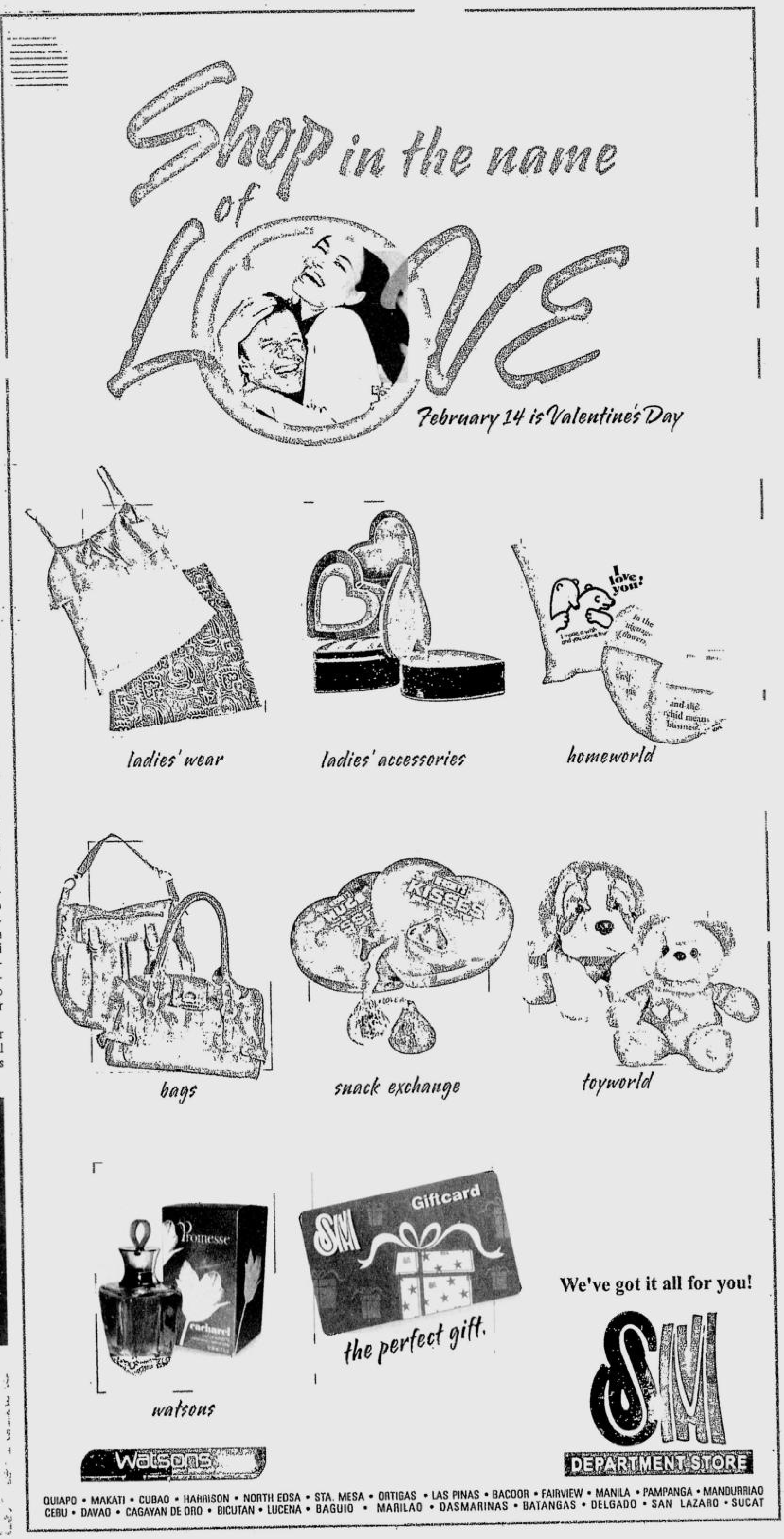
Every detail has been given our utmost attention to ensure that your Valentine experience will be exquisitely memorable. Now that you are assured of a seamless and stress-free celebration, you can go ahead and show her just how special she is.

From now until Feb. 16, every Suite Valentine Treats booking for the reasonable rate of P4,999++ comes with a complimentary bottle of Louis Chatel red wine; a delectable three-course dinner for two by Azzurro Bistro; sumptuous breakfast in bed for the couple; plus the option to be serenaded by the featured acoustic artist for the night at Azzurro Bistro & Bar.

Couples availing of the promo also get to relax in its well-equipped Health Club. Enjoy free use of the heated indoor pool, sauna, gym and Jacuzzi. Also get a 20-percent discount on all SPAromatherapy (massage) treatments.

To avail yourselves of the Suite Valentine Treats promo, call The Linden Suites at 638-7878 or e-mail sales@lindensuites.com.





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